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Sexual assault in our society: women (and men) take back the night

Julie Marie Wooden
Iowa State University

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Sexual assault in our society: Women (and men) take back the night

by

Julie Marie Wooden

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2000

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Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Julie Marie Wooden

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

For those who have the strength to survive and the courage to speak out.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an historical and present-day examination of the Take Back the Night movement. Take Back the Night is a grassroots movement whose ultimate goal is the prevention of sexual violence against women. The purpose of this study is to determine what benefits Take Back the Night provides to the individuals who attend and also what role men have in this movement. While some of the information was collected from participants around the country, most of the data came from two specific cities, Ames, IA and Boone, NC. Questionnaires were collected from 27 participants, and eight respondents were interviewed, all of whom attended at least one Take Back the Night or similar event. Results indicate that a majority of participants of these events receive a variety of benefits, have few negative experiences, and believe men should be included in Take Back the Night. Themes identified in this study are Take Back the Night history at the international, national, and local levels; participants' expectations and benefits gained; the role of Take Back the Night in the healing process of sexual assault survivors; and, the involvement of men in the Take Back the Night movement. Criticisms of the anti-rape movement and of Take Back the Night are examined. Suggestions for future research are also included.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

One in four women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime (Ledray, 1994). In the United States, a woman is raped every two minutes (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 1999). In Canada, a woman is the victim of sexual assault every 6 minutes (Open UVic Resource Sexual Assault Centre, 1999). Although it is a taboo topic, sexual assault is a prevalent and pervasive element in our society. In this thesis, I will examine Take Back the Night, a grassroots anti-rape movement whose ultimate goal is the prevention of violence against women. I will consider what benefits, if any, Take Back the Night provides not only to the individuals who attend, but also to the community in which it takes place. I will also explore the role men have in this movement and consider whether the inclusion of men in these events will help the movement achieve its ultimate goals.

Take Back the Night Rallies and Marches began in the 1970's as a form of feminist social activism to raise awareness of and to protest the prevalence of violence, particularly sexual assault, against women in our society. Take Back the Night is an event where people gather together to speak out against the violence that permeates our society, drawing upon women's lack of safety and freedom within their own homes, neighborhoods, and cities. Since its inception, Take Back the Night events have multiplied throughout the nation, growing steadily in their occurrence, numbers, and strength (Daun, 1997). In many cities, Take Back the Night has broadened to include other issues that affect women in their homes, workplaces, and lives including such issues as battering, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and discrimination. In many cities and on many college campuses, it has become an annual event in which women can join together to gain strength, solidarity, empowerment, and a voice to speak out against the oppressions of a patriarchal culture that perpetuates

violence against women.

While definitions and laws can vary from state to state, there is a distinct difference between rape and sexual assault. According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, forcible rape is defined as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded” (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997). According to this definition, the victims of rape are always female, but this is not to say that men cannot be and are not raped.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) defines rape as “forced sexual intercourse and includes both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object” (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995, p. 6). The NCVS definition is applicable to and includes both women and men and also both completed and attempted rapes. The NCVS defines sexual assault as

a wide range of victimizations, separate from rape or attempted rape. These crimes include attacks or attempted attacks generally involving (unwanted) sexual contact between the victim and offender. Sexual assaults may or may not involve force and include such things as grabbing or fondling. Sexual assault also includes verbal threats. (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995, p. 7)

Regardless of the definition, it is important to note that a majority of women are victimized by known offenders rather than by strangers. According to the NCVS, “friends or acquaintances of the victims committed over half of the rapes or sexual assaults” (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995, p. 1). It is also necessary to understand that rape is a crime, not a sexual impulse. Instead of teaching women how to avoid and prevent rape, our society needs to address the rape culture in which we live.

A rape culture is a complex combination of societal attitudes, norms, beliefs, values and power that portrays and accepts rape as an inevitable fact of life. As defined by the editors of Transforming a Rape Culture (1993), a rape culture is

a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women *as the norm*. (Buchwald, E., Fletcher, P.R., & Roth, M., 1993, p. i)

Ledray (1994) also addresses the concept of a rape culture, stating, "We must address and change those sociocultural factors that predispose us to be a rape-prone society" (p. 244). Until these attitudes and power imbalances are addressed, women will continue to live in a culture of rape that can be changed through proactive movements, and Take Back the Night is one such example.

Sexual assault in our society can be examined through the creation and existence of Take Back the Night Rallies and Marches, an important form of international, national, and local feminist social activism that raises awareness about violence against women in our society. As an annual event in many cities and on many college campuses throughout the world, its primary goal is to raise awareness about the prevalence of violence against women and ultimately to put an end to the atrocities that women experience on a daily basis. Sexual assault will not stop without raising awareness and educating both women and men about this seemingly invisible but worldwide epidemic.

The main goal of Take Back the Night is to raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault on our campuses and in our communities, but the possibility of additional benefits also needs to be examined. Does Take Back the Night provide benefits to the

individual participants and does the community in which it takes place benefit from its existence? If so, what kinds of benefits do those individuals and communities receive? Can these events empower women and men, aid in the healing process of survivors, provide a sense of community, educate individuals and the broader community, protest violence against women, or help women feel safer? As an educational tool, does Take Back the Night have the power to raise participants' levels of knowledge and empowerment related to the issues of sexual violence? Is further participation in other forms of prevention or activism related to violence against women an additional outcome from participating in Take Back the Night? The potential benefits of empowering women to take a stand against victimization and of eradicating the stigma and guilt placed on survivors forces all of society to take responsibility rather than placing the responsibility on the shoulders of all women.

Whether men should be included in this movement in order to achieve its goals is also an important element that must be explored. Gender issues are embedded in sexual assault and therefore they may also affect the goals and purposes of Take Back the Night. In many cities and on many college campuses, Take Back the Night is an all-women activity excluding men from participating in the rally, march, or both. Many cities also include male-only activities and discussions for men to participate in while the women march. Activities such as Take Back the Night have the power to educate and raise awareness about issues of violence against women, to empower women, and to aid survivors in the healing process. If events such as Take Back the Night are to serve as important means of public education about and prevention of violence against women, does including men help strengthen these goals and the impact of such rallies? Is it essential to have both women and men involved in order to meet these goals and provide any benefits? Raising awareness, taking a stand

against violence, aiding in the healing process, and sending a message to the community and to society that this violence must end are not just women's issues; they should be human issues. Studying gender issues surrounding violence against women can help determine the importance of including or excluding men at Take Back the Night events.

Take Back the Night is a grass roots movement with no central leadership and includes people with differing opinions. Differing opinions about the format and purpose of the event can affect the potential benefits individuals may receive as a result of their participation. Differing opinions concerning the involvement or the exclusion of men can also undermine the effectiveness of Take Back the Night if it is to be perceived as a unifying and successful movement. Gender issues may be dividing the movement to eradicate violence against women making it less effective than it could be. Does the inclusion of men in Take Back the Night activities affect the proposed benefits? Can women feel truly empowered and survivors continue to heal? Does Take Back the Night raise the consciousness and awareness of women as well as men? Do men receive the same benefits as women? Should men be included, and if so, to what extent?

I would argue that it is necessary to examine the issue of gender in reference to Take Back the Night because the prevention of violence against women cannot be achieved without first educating men, the primary aggressors, and getting them actively involved in the awareness and prevention of such crimes. Take Back the Night can serve as a visible, vocal and unifying activity dedicated to raising awareness and educating individuals and communities about this human issue. If Take Back the Night is to serve successfully as a public education tool and to prevent violence against women, the appropriate degree and nature of men's involvement must be determined in order to create the most effective

movement possible.

Education is crucial to generating change, and Take Back the Night can serve as a visible activity dedicated to educating our society as well as to offering strategies to combat this growing yet invisible problem. While one day a year may not be enough, activities such as Take Back the Night provide the potential to reach many people in a vocal, empowering, and unifying forum.

In order to determine what benefits are gained and what men's place is in these activities, it is important to study what participants' personal experiences were in Take Back the Night and their beliefs about whether men should or should not be included. While data were collected from around the country, two specific cities, both of which are also college towns -- Ames, Iowa and Boone, North Carolina -- will be examined. Both have been holding Take Back the Night rallies in their own different and unique ways for at least a decade. For both, the primary purpose is to raise awareness and make a powerful statement about the epidemic of violence against women in our society. Men are welcome to participate in all Take Back the Night activities, including both the rally and the march, in these two towns.

Chapter Two will examine the history and organization of Take Back the Night at both a national level and a local level, incorporating the histories of the Ames, IA and Boone, NC events. Chapter Three will explain the methods of collecting the information through the use of questionnaires and personal interviews. Chapter Four will explore the findings of the interviews conducted and the questionnaires collected. What are the actual benefits received by individual Take Back the Night participants? Do participants believe that men have a role in these activities, and, if so, what? Chapter Five will propose some specific conclusions,

based on the information and data collected, and utilizing feminist theory Chapter 5 will also offer some possibilities for future research on Take Back the Night.

CHAPTER 2. HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION OF TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

The written history of the Take Back the Night movement is minimal and contradictory at best. While it is difficult to determine an exact origination point, the creation of this event nonetheless sparked a worldwide movement organized primarily by and for women. This chapter will include the history and organization of Take Back the Night at international, national, and local levels, including: (a) the first Take Back the Night, (b) the first national Take Back the Night in the United States, (c) Take Back the Night activities in Ames, Iowa and, (d) Take Back the Night activities in Boone, North Carolina.

Internationally

Take Back the Night Marches began in the 1970's as a form of feminist social activism to raise awareness of and to protest the prevalence of violence, particularly sexual assault, against women in our society. Why a march?

A march is one way that support for an issue can be assessed. Marches can bring together many women to voice protest, propose concrete solutions, provide each other with morale-building support, and gain publicity. ... Anger is taking [the place of silence] as women insist – loudly and publicly – that something must be done about violence against women. (Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, 1997)

In researching the history of this event, several discrepancies and notable differences were found. It has become apparent that much of women's activism relies on word of mouth and Take Back the Night seems to be no different. We have such a rich oral history that seems to be stored in people's minds only to be forgotten or never shared. It is frustrating and disheartening to imagine the cultural and gender wars women have fought and the accomplishments women have achieved over the centuries that have yet to carve their place in our history. It has been difficult to trace the history of Take Back the Night, a women's grassroots effort that has only been in existence for approximately 25 years. The irony in this

is the lack of empowerment women have experienced in recording their own history, which cannot and should not be ignored.

While there have been some discrepancies in the historical information regarding Take Back the Night, most resources state that the original event, formed in 1977, began as an all-woman event in England in opposition to violence against women, namely rape (Daun, 1997). Take Back the Night, originally called “Women Reclaim the Night,” broadened its scope to include other issues related to the safety and equality of women, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination (Daun, 1997). In Australia, known as “Reclaim the Night,” it is a huge network of marches and rallies celebrating its 20th anniversary in the movement.

It began in response to a public announcement that women should stay home at night if they wanted to be safe. Women were angered by this and in response organised the first march calling for safety from sexual violence in the home and on the streets. (Reclaim the Night, 1999)

Another source traces the history of the first Take Back the Night to Frankfurt, Germany in 1977. “On May Day Eve, 3,000 women took to the streets to protest pervasive and systemic violence against them. The next year, there were marches in Germany, France, England, Canada, and the United States” (Daun, 1997). One source also traces its beginning to Germany but in 1973 “after a series of murders, rapes, and sexual assaults” (Biello, 1997). According to an article by the Women’s Resource & Action Center at the University of Iowa, Take Back the Night was begun in 1976 by “women attending the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women in Belgium [who] marched together in solidarity, holding candles to protest the ways in which violence permeates the lives of women worldwide” (Women’s Resource & Action Center, 1999). While there are several discrepancies regarding the

country and year of its origination, all seem to agree that Take Back the Night began in Europe in the 1970's.

Nationally

The first U.S. national Take Back the Night March was held in San Francisco, California in November 1978 "in conjunction with the first feminist conference on pornography" (A. Dworkin, personal communication, June 1, 1999). In 1978, an organization called Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media held a national conference in San Francisco entitled "Feminist Perspectives on Pornography."

For the first time in history, women from across the country gather[ed] to discuss the destructive consequences of pornography, to exchange information and analysis, and to plan strategies for eliminating pornography. In conjunction with the conference, a Take Back the Night March [was] staged through San Francisco's pornography district. Over 5,000 women from thirty states participate[d] and return[ed] to their own communities to continue the work. (Lederer, 1980, p. 15)

While pornography was the main focal point of the first Take Back the Night march in the United States, "Over the years, many women's groups felt stigmatized by organizing against pornography – reacting to charges of being pro-censorship – and many organizers began to shun organizing against pornography at all" (A. Dworkin, personal communication, June 1, 1999).

Even though violent crimes against women, such as rapes, muggings, sexual harassment, and assault, occur at all times, the term Take Back the Night originates from the fear women had of strangers while they walked the streets after dark. In some places, the name has been changed because of the irony associated with the fact that many violent crimes take place not on the streets or in dark alleyways, but in places women thought they'd be safe and by people whom women thought they could trust. Based on the National Crime

Victimization Survey by the U.S. Department of Justice, in 1996 there were a total of 307,000 completed and attempted rapes and sexual assaults (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 1999). According to the U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Report (1997), there were 96,122 forcible rape crimes reported in the United States in 1997.

While some may take exception to the term and its meaning, the fact that women

have been unable to walk the streets after dark without a male to protect [them] from all the rest of the men has been assumed in this society for so long that people can hardly imagine a culture in which this would not be the case. (Lederer, 1980, p. 19)

Innumerable sexual assaults occur in women's own homes by acquaintances, friends, and partners, demonstrating that women truly have more than their nights to "take back;" they have to regain their rights.

The slogan Take Back the Night was first used in the United States as a theme for this national protest march down San Francisco's pornography strip. The march took place at night and was in the spirit of many similar events taking place all over the world. Take Back the Night was a profound symbolic statement of [the] commitment to stopping the tide of violence against women in all arenas, and our demand that the perpetrators of such violence ... be held responsible for their actions and made to change. (Lederer, 1980, p. 19)

In a speech entitled "Exhortation to March" given before the 1978 Take Back the Night March in San Francisco, Andrea Dworkin, noted feminist scholar, stated,

Tonight we are going to walk together, all of us, to take back the night, as women have in cities all over the world, because in every sense none of us can walk alone. Every woman walking alone is a target. Every woman walking alone is hunted, harassed, time after time harmed by psychic or physical violence. Only by walking together can we walk at all with any sense of safety, dignity, or freedom. Tonight, walking together we will proclaim to the rapists ... that their days are numbered and our time has come. And tomorrow, what will we do tomorrow? Because, sisters, the truth is that we have to take back every night, or the night will never be ours. And once we have conquered the dark, we have to reach for the light, to take the day and make it ours. This is our choice, and this is our necessity. ... For us, the two are indivisible, as we must be indivisible in our fight for freedom. ... This we must do

and this we will do, for our own sakes and for the sake of every woman who has ever lived. (Dworkin, 1978, p. 290-291)

While they may have a variety of names - Take Back the Night, Walk for Awareness, Reclaim the Night -- and a variety of formats - marching in silence, marching with shouts of anger, marching with men, women marching alone - all of these events owe their origination to the first Take Back the Night. No matter the name or format, all of these events also share one common thread, the protest of violence against women and the hope and desire for women to live a life free of fear and harm. As a grassroots movement, Take Back the Night has no standard format, no set date, and no specific requirements. Organizers are free to choose their own theme, format, and activities, thus allowing for a variety of unique and different events. One major difference is in the differing opinions regarding the involvement of men in these events. Every place handles this argument differently, from the complete exclusion of men to the complete inclusion of men and everything in between. In this thesis, I will examine two different events in particular and also explore the opinions and experiences of those who have participated in Take Back the Night Rallies and Marches. For each specific city, Ames, Iowa and Boone, North Carolina, I will examine: (a) city and campus dynamics, (b) why they have the marches, (c) who participates, (d) why and how they participate and, (e) what the format is of their own respective event.

Ames, Iowa

The first Take Back the Night Rally and March in Ames, IA occurred in approximately the late 1980's. In September 1987, a week-long program called "Take Back Our Lives" was held, which included workshops, speakers, and a daytime rally. It was modeled after many of the Take Back the Night programs that promoted women's rights to

safety and to eliminate violence (Reichert, 1987). While the purpose and goals have remained the same, the format and timing have changed over the years. Much of the following information is based on my personal experience, since I served as co-chair of these events from 1995 - 1998 and as a consultant in 1999-2000. Ames, a college town, is also the home of Iowa State University (ISU), which has a current enrollment of approximately 26,000 students (Iowa State University: Office of Institutional Research, 1999). The current Ames population is estimated at 48,691, which includes student enrollment at ISU (Community Profile, 2000). The campus administration and city leaders have been very supportive of the Take Back the Night activities, including speaking at the rally and the signing of a city proclamation by the mayor of Ames.

Like many Take Back the Night events, the Ames Take Back the Night consists of a rally on central campus, which is open to campus and community members alike, followed by a march, which winds its way through both the ISU campus and the Ames community. Currently, the Ames Take Back the Night March takes place in April of each year, in correspondence with the National Sexual Assault Awareness Month observance. On other campuses, Take Back the Night often occurs in March during Women's History Month or in October during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. For the past three years, the Ames Take Back the Night has also occurred right before VEISHEA, a 75-year traditional festival that celebrates Iowa State. Over the years, many claim that VEISHEA's focus has turned from one of family entertainment to more of a party atmosphere. In fact, student-led riots three times in the past decade and the homicide of a prospective ISU student in an alcohol related incident three years ago have led the ISU administration to take a serious look at alcohol consumption and abuse at ISU (Deutmeyer, 1997). Because of the past prevalence

of alcohol during this celebration, the Ames-ISU Take Back the Night committee has consciously chosen to hold Take Back the Night at the same time to tie in the relationship of alcohol and sexual assault.

In two separate surveys conducted one month apart (March 7, 1996 and April 2, 1996) by the Iowa State Department of Health and Safety Development, the relationship between alcohol and sexual assault becomes quite apparent. "Of the 264 ISU students surveyed, 60 respondents said they [knew] someone at ISU who was sexually assaulted. ... According to the April 2 survey, 80 percent said alcohol was a factor in the incident of the respondents who said they knew of someone who was a sexual assault victim" (Rahim, 1996). Nationally, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, at least 45 percent of rapists in 1994 were under the influence of drugs or alcohol (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, 1999).

Like rallies around the country, the Ames Take Back the Night Committee saw the importance and the need for an open and honest dialogue about sexual assault on the campus and in the community. The prevalence of sexual assault in our society and the cultural attitudes that perpetuate it need to be addressed both vocally and visually and Take Back the Night rallies are one way to achieve this goal. According to the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (IowaCASA, 1999), 3,356 survivors of sexual assault received services from Iowa crisis centers in 1999. In 1998, Iowa law enforcement agencies received 1,814 sex offense reports, including 704 forcible rapes, 829 reports of forcible fondling, 60 sexual assaults with an object, 81 reports of forcible sodomy, 34 reports of incest, and 106 reports of statutory rape (IowaCASA, 1999). The rally, with an average attendance of 300 people over the last few years, is a very unifying experience and a demonstrative way to raise awareness

of these issues and statistics.

Each year, several survivors of sexual assault, usually Iowa State students and/or staff, share their personal and courageous stories with the participants at the rally. This is a powerful way to put a face with these often unspeakable acts and to show students that “yes, it really does happen here.” Often when it comes to interpersonal violence issues, it is easy for women to say “that doesn’t affect me” or “that will never happen to me” and they are then less inclined to discuss or educate themselves about these issues until they or someone close to them is in a crisis situation, and by then it’s too late. At the 1999 rally, a female ISU student survivor shared her powerful story, an all too often occurrence, of being raped by an acquaintance in her residence hall room. She spoke of how the assault made her feel “cheap and dirty” and “robbed her of her body, mind, soul and spirit” (Hiler, 1999, p.1). Survivors are an important and powerful component of any rally, because the messages they send have a far greater impact than any statistic could. Julie DeVall, director of the local assault care center, “called the march and rally a ‘safe and honoring place for survivors to speak out’ ... [and] applauded the tremendous courage of survivors who are willing to raise their voices about sexual assault. ‘Our message is golden,’ she said. ‘The only shame is if we hold our tongues’” (Hiler, 1999, p.1).

Statistics reported by the ISU Department of Public Safety are misleading and can provide students with a false sense of security. Sex offenses reported to the ISU Department of Public Safety in 1998 include three reports of forcible rape and one report of forcible fondling.

The ISU Department of Public Safety works as a partner in the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) to assist sexual assault survivors. Story County (SART) law enforcement agencies received 51 reports of sexual assault between July 1, 1998 and

June 30, 1999. (Department of Public Safety, 1999, p. 7)

On the other hand, sexual assaults reported to the local crisis line were significantly different. The Assault Care Center Extending Shelter and Support (ACCESS) is a local agency that provides services to victims of both domestic violence and sexual assault. ACCESS operates a confidential battered women's shelter and a 24-hour crisis line. Located in Ames, ACCESS serves two counties in central Iowa but receives a majority of its crisis calls from Ames and Iowa State University. In fiscal year 1998-99, ACCESS, through its crisis line, received 267 rape crisis calls from Ames and Iowa State University, plus an additional 37 calls from callers who did not identify their geographic location (T. Stone, personal communication, February 18, 2000). Clearly there is a significant discrepancy between the number of sexual assaults being reported to official investigative units and the number of assaults being reported anonymously to human service organizations. The anonymity that a crisis line provides further demonstrates the attitudes formed in our culture about rape.

As demonstrated above, the stigma and the blame that are placed upon survivors in our society, particularly by the legal system, significantly affect the statistical data, minimizing the actuality and magnitude of these crimes. According to the U.S. Department of Justice,

Estimating rates of violence against women, particularly sexual assault and other incidents which are perpetrated by intimate offenders, continues to be a difficult task. Many factors inhibit women from reporting these victimizations both to police and to interviewers, including the private nature of the event, the perceived stigma associated with one's victimization, and the belief that no purpose will be served in reporting it. (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995, p. 1)

Cultural and societal attitudes that these offenses are private, personal matters and not violent crimes also trivialize the life-long painful consequences and memories that survivors

experience. Myths and stereotypes, held by both women and men, are another set of factors that need to be addressed in the education and prevention of sexual assault. To that end, the mission of the Ames-ISU Take Back the Night rally is: (a) to raise awareness and to educate about the prevalence of violence against women, (b) to empower women to take a stand against violence and refuse to be victimized, (c) to send a message that this violence must end, and (d) to aid victims in the healing process.

A committee of student and community members plans the Ames Take Back the Night event with major sponsorship provided by the YWCA of Ames-Iowa State University, the Margaret Sloss Women's Center, and ACCESS. Numerous academic and administrative departments and community organizations also provide financial and moral support. Because the Ames-ISU Take Back the Night Committee is a registered student organization, it is also required to have an advisor from an Iowa State department or organization. The current advisor for the past seven years is Judy Dolphin, Executive Director of the YWCA of Ames-Iowa State University. Committee members serve on a completely voluntary basis and are solicited through classes, Greek houses, residence halls, public service announcements, and word of mouth. Anyone, including men, can participate in every aspect of the Ames-ISU Take Back the Night, from the planning committee to attending the rally to participating in the march. The committee members and their advisor review this policy annually. The ratio of women to men at recent Take Back the Night events has been roughly 5:1. The Ames Take Back the Night Committee strongly believes that men are an integral part of this movement and must be included in all aspects in order to work towards achieving their goals.

As stated earlier, the Ames Take Back the Night event consists of a rally on central

campus, which is open to campus and community members alike, followed by a candle-lit march, which winds its way through both the ISU campus and the Ames community. During the march, participants vocally spread their message shouting various Take Back the Night chants, such as “Women Unite, Take Back the Night” and “Join Together, Free Our Lives, We Will Not Be Victimized.” The march deliberately passes through the ISU Greek system, by residence halls, and along a street lined with popular college hangouts, mostly bars. After the march, participants return to central campus and a reception is held in the Margaret Sloss Women’s Center with various campus and community organizations providing resource materials and personnel, usually sexual assault counselors and advocates, so that participants can gather further information or seek help. While the prevention of violence against women cannot be achieved in one day, these activities open the door for further education, dialogue, and activities.

Boone, North Carolina

The Walk for Awareness in Boone, North Carolina is another example of an annual event that protests the prevalence of violence against women. While similar in purpose and mission to the Take Back the Night in Ames, the events that led to the creation of this movement are quite different. It was created in 1989 in response to a particular series of events that occurred in this small city, located in the Appalachian Mountains. Boone, NC is also a college town, the home of Appalachian State University (ASU) with an enrollment of approximately 12,000 students. The current Boone population, excluding ASU students, is estimated at 14,500 residents (Appalachian Alumni Association, 2000). The campus administration is extremely supportive of this annual activity. Barbara Daye, Dean of Students for Appalachian State University, is the event’s primary organizer.

Like many Take Back the Night events, the Boone event consists of a rally and march, both open to campus and community members, which travels through the ASU campus and downtown Boone. Participants, including women, men, and children, join together for both the rally and the walk. Over the past few years, attendance has averaged around 1,000 participants, a powerful message from a small community. "The walk serves as a reminder of the need for personal safety and raises awareness of violence committed against all people" (Nicholson, 1992).

Similar to Iowa State University, the statistics reported by the ASU Campus Police and the Boone Police Department are also relatively low. In 1998, the Boone Police Department reported zero rapes and four sexual offenses, including three indecent exposures and one involving a minor (F. Guy, personal communication, September 13, 1999). The ASU Campus Police received four sexual assault reports, all acquaintance rapes, of which zero were arrested or charged (S. Sears, personal communication, September 13, 1999). Like ISU, these numbers do not include any sexual assaults that may have been reported to other departments such as the student counseling center, residence halls, or judicial affairs office. Surprisingly, sexual assaults reported to the local crisis line were not significantly different. Opposing Abuse with Service, Information, and Shelter (OASIS) is a local agency that provides services to victims of both family violence and sexual assault. OASIS operates a confidential battered women's shelter and a 24-hour crisis line. Located in Boone, OASIS serves three counties in North Carolina. According to Terry Julian, Community Educator for OASIS, only 18 sexual assault calls came into the crisis line during fiscal year 1998-99 (personal communication, March 16, 2000).

At its inception in 1989, the Boone event was called Take Back the Night. After the

first year, it retained the same format and goals but in 1990 changed its name to Walk for Awareness to be more reflective of its purpose.

The 1989 event was established following the death of Jeni Gray, a staff writer for the [Appalachian State] university. Gray was abducted during a walk through the campus and downtown Boone and was murdered September 24, 1989. ... Not long after Gray disappeared, an Appalachian student, Leigh Wallace, was running one afternoon in the Boone area and she was abducted and raped by the same man who was later convicted of murdering Jeni Gray. ... Although people became more concerned about personal safety and were more careful, their caution only lasted a short time. The walk through campus and the downtown Boone area was established as a memorial to Gray and to serve as a reminder of the need for personal safety. (B. Daye, personal communication, March 17, 1998)

Concerned over seeing students and community members return to their old habits within months after the abductions, Daye created the Walk as a reminder of the consciousness about their own personal safety that people need to have on a daily basis. "While the Take Back the Night march that followed the disappearance of Jeni Gray expressed anger over violence, Daye hope[d] the fall walk would be more reflective" (Thompson, 1990, p.9).

Leigh Cooper Wallace, a member of the ASU Cross Country Team, was on a training run when she was abducted in broad daylight, raped, and threatened at gunpoint. With her wrists bound and a gun held to her head, her attacker sexually assaulted her and described in detail how he murdered Jeni Gray and where he hid her body. After several hours in captivity, including several sexual assaults, Wallace was able to escape, taking with her a detailed description of her assailant and information regarding the disappearance of Jeni Gray. Her detailed descriptions, information, and testimony led to the capture and conviction of the abductor/murderer, Daniel Brian Lee (Greene, 1992). "He pleaded guilty, but [Wallace's] testimony helped jurors decide to give him the death penalty" (Greene, 1992, p. A1). Lee died in prison from a brain aneurysm while serving four consecutive life sentences

for the charges related to [Wallace] and while on death row for the charges related to Gray (Greene, 1992; Hodges, 1999).

In my personal interview with Wallace, she discussed the atmosphere of the first event, held only six days after her abduction, and the negative, hostile messages she felt the Take Back the Night event was sending to the community. Wallace attended Take Back the Night with her family and described the anger she felt that night, not at her abductor, but at the participants of the rally.

It was mostly women and it was more of an angry type feel – anger and confusion. ... It didn't turn out to be what I wanted it to be. ... There was a real angry feel and people were telling their stories and blaming the police and blaming men and getting angry and it was upsetting me. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Wallace was most dismayed at the anger and blame being directed towards other men in the community; other men she felt had done nothing but provide her with support, concern, and assistance.

Wallace felt the messages being expressed by both the participants and the title were inaccurate and misleading. According to her, the overall message was “anti-male, anti-Boone, anti-police” implying that the police weren't doing their job and that the town was turning into a dangerous place to live (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998). She also has a negative opinion of the term Take Back the Night and its implications.

I felt like nothing had really been taken from me that couldn't also be taken from a man. The presence of the signs, their messages were negative. Maybe it's that Take Back the Night sends the wrong message that it's only at night when bad things happen. It could happen anytime. [That] this safe community is changing and we're no longer safe here and I didn't want to give that message. I still knew that this was a great community to live in and I didn't want this to destroy the image of this community. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Based on these events, the purpose of the Walk for Awareness is: “(a) to remember

Jeni Gray, (b) to make a commitment to practice good personal safety habits, (c) to support victims and survivors of acts of violence, and (d) to, by our presence, affirm and reaffirm our commitment to awareness and to make a statement against acts of violence” (B. Daye, personal communication, March 17, 1998). According to Daye, the Walk is always held the Tuesday after Labor Day, early in the school year, and heavily targets incoming freshmen. The rally begins on the steps of an administrative campus building, followed by the walk through the campus and downtown Boone to a senior center, and concludes with additional speakers. The march starts where Gray worked and ends where she was last seen alive (B. Daye, personal communication, March 17, 1998).

An important difference between this walk and the Ames march is that the ASU walk is silent. Daye believes there is “power in silence.” The participants always walk in silence except for a single chime or drum beat that represents statistically how often acts of violence occur on a large-scale level. Walking in silence creates “a time for reflection, showing respect, remembering and thinking” and also shows support for survivors who are also participating in the Walk (B. Daye, personal communication, March 17, 1998). As a survivor, Wallace also appreciates the silent walk and sees it as a time when people are “thinking about what we’re talking about. When it’s silent I do a lot more thinking and reflecting. It’s peaceful” (personal communication, August 12, 1998).

During the Walk for Awareness, an informational sheet is distributed including statistics, laws, resources, etc. that contributes to the goal of raising awareness about personal safety issues and violence against women. All campus and community members are encouraged to attend, including the members of the Boone police, the mayor and the ASU Chancellor, Francis Borkowski. The participants, both women and men, are welcomed and

asked to make a commitment towards the prevention of violence in all its forms (B. Daye, personal communication, March 17, 1998). As Marva McKinnon, a guest speaker at the 1997 Walk, eloquently stated, "In an age when compassion, humanity, and the sanctity of life are so easily disregarded, each member of society is responsible for the welfare of all" (Peake, 1997, p. 1A).

Residence hall staff offer programs before the Walk, and many residence hall floors and Greek houses attend the event as a group. As part of the university curriculum, all new incoming students attend a freshman seminar and many of the teachers include the Walk for Awareness as a class requirement. The planning committee, headed by Daye, is open to anyone and comprised of students, staff, and community people, usually more women than men (B. Daye, personal communication, March 17, 1998). Wallace has served on the planning committee and has participated in the Walk for Awareness rally as a guest speaker every year since its inception in 1990. For the Boone and ASU community, Chancellor Borkowski describes the Walk for Awareness as "a night of a great deal of symbolism for what much of our society and culture has become" (Peake, 1997, p. 1A).

Conclusion

As has been illustrated with these two examples, Take Back the Night rallies and marches have a rich history and are an on-going event in many cities and on many college campuses around the United States. While they may have different themes, mission statements, and formats, one thing they all have in common is their shared desire for the prevention of violence against women in our society. These activities provide a forum in which the participants and the broader community can be educated about the prevalence and pervasiveness of violence against women. Hundreds or even thousands of women gathering

together in one place at one time provides a type of empowerment for women that cannot be easily replicated. "The unifying purpose of Take Back the Night is the self empowerment of the women planning and attending the rally/march" (Daun, 1997, p.13). Take Back the Night is a forum that provides survivors of violence with a voice that is otherwise silenced by our cultural attitudes, values and patriarchal power structures. Not everyone involved in the movement shares those similar feelings though.

Nikki Craft, a radical feminist, has expressed her concern over the damage being done by women to the Take Back the Night movement and to feminism.

I became discouraged and depressed about the cooptation of them and the lack of creative development over the years of the Take Back the Night demonstrations. ... It's the overall lack of creativity, cowardice and cooptability of feminism expressed in the Take Back the Night marches that frustrates me. (N. Craft, personal communication, May 20, 1999)

She cited several examples such as an East Lansing, Michigan event where women organizers held the march during the daytime so women would feel safe during the event, completely contradicting the march's original purpose. When she confronted the organizers in East Lansing during a late 1980's event, she demanded to know who coopted their event and a woman replied, "Nobody needed to do it to us. We did it ourselves" (N. Craft, personal communication, May 22, 1999). Another example she gave was a Take Back the Night rally she went to in Dallas, Texas where the marchers were told not to chant during the entire march which was held on the Southern Methodist University campus because it would disturb students who may be studying (N. Craft, personal communication, May 20, 1999).

Craft believes that these types of concessions definitely harm, by contradicting the purpose and message of Take Back the Night, rather than help a movement that was originally based on anger, frustration, and a lack of empowerment. She states, "Too many

Take Back the Night marches fill up the speakers with local politicians and rule out women speakers who are going to be radical or provoke anger” (personal communication, May 22, 1999). She cited another East Lansing, Michigan event where “several women were discouraged from saying anything that might be angry or ‘embarrassing’ to the [event] organizers” (N. Craft, personal communication, May 28, 2000). Craft believes that, as necessary as it is for men to support these efforts and to even perhaps march separately, when men march alongside women it contradicts the purpose of Take Back the Night which is to empower women. She states that by men marching it “dilutes and coopts the original intent of the march and also usurps women’s energy” (N. Craft, personal communication, June 12, 2000). While she feels Take Back the Night is an important part of women’s history, Craft stated, “In a decade I don’t think they changed enough to keep women excited and to keep the movement developing” (personal communication, May 20, 1999). Dworkin agrees with Craft and too has seen “what grotesque usages the marches can be made to accommodate” (personal communication, June 1, 1999). For Craft, Take Back the Night has too often become owned by those it serves. Rather than being a form of feminist social activism with the common mission of addressing and preventing violence against women, some Take Back the Night events, created by women organizers, surrender to the hierarchy of the campus administrators who have designated what form Take Back the Night will assume based on their comfort level, cowardice, and desire to maintain the status quo rather than allowing the participants to take a stand, demonstrate, and speak out, which was the original purpose of Take Back the Night. Craft states,

Many of these compromises, I believe, are a result of lack of experience by the organizers and the cooptation by university funding. Money talks and it silences too and in the case of Take Back the Night marches these women often can act as the

inside guards over women's rage at some of the more disappointing Take Back the Night marches. (N. Craft, personal communication, May 28, 2000)

The fact that many campuses and communities are celebrating a decade or more in the movement also demonstrates the reality that much more work still needs to be done. For this reason, Dworkin hopes Take Back the Night continues to be "a rite of passage at colleges and universities" (personal communication, June 1, 1999). There are also new issues that need to be addressed in the future in order to make the Take Back the Night movement more inclusive and representative of all women.

The relatively recent push for the recognition of the special needs of women of color, disabled women, lesbian and bisexual women, and women with children is an important step towards the self empowerment of all women ... the goal of Take Back the Night. (Daun, 1997, p. 13)

While one day a year may not be enough, women are given the opportunity, through Take Back the Night, to empower themselves and make a stand against the daily atrocities they experience in their homes, workplaces, and lives.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter will examine the data collection methods I utilized to explore Take Back the Night rallies. I gathered information from a variety of individuals who participated in Take Back the Night events, addressing issues such as their perceptions of the purpose of Take Back the Night, their expectations, their opinions about the involvement of men in such activities, and the benefits they identified based on their own personal experiences. This chapter will also explain the statistical methods utilized to analyze the research data. The results of the data collected will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Ames, IA and Boone, NC sites were chosen in part due to my personal involvement with each area. The locations also provided an excellent opportunity to compare and contrast two events with similar objectives but different formats. For the past six years, I have been both a coordinator of and a participant in the Ames-Iowa State Take Back the Night events. During this time, I have also spoken at several of the rallies. Additionally, as sexual assault awareness educator for the local rape crisis and domestic violence agency, member of the ISU Sexual Assault Task Force, and advocate on the Story County Sexual Assault Response Team, the issue of violence against women plays a large role in both my academic and professional careers. The Boone site was chosen in part because I had personal contacts in that area, but also because of the circumstances surrounding the origin of and the incredible community support for the event.

I collected data in two ways, through in-person interviews and through questionnaires. In her analysis of feminist research methods, Reinharz (1992) “found that many researchers use a variety of methods rather than a single one” (p. 10). When participants “have the language and experience to describe their own behavior, interviews

and questionnaires are useful instruments for gathering data in a natural setting. Each has its own distinct advantages, although there is also a close resemblance between the two” (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984, p. 128). The in-person interviews were conducted in Ames, Iowa and Boone, North Carolina. Questionnaires with a cover letter and self-addressed/stamped envelope, if necessary, were also distributed by handing them out in person, mailing them through the postal service, or e-mailing them through the internet from my personal e-mail account. The target population was quite specific: individuals, male or female, who have attended at least one Take Back the Night rally or similar event. It was not feasible to compile a list of such persons so random sampling was not possible. A random sample is “chosen by chance procedures ... so that every individual in the population will have the same likelihood of being selected” (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984, p. 479).

Potential participants for the study were identified in one of three ways: (a) through personal contacts and acquaintances, (b) through research over the internet which identified other cities and universities that held such events and also identified potential contacts, or (c) through other events and activities that addressed issues of violence against women, such as conferences and educational programs. Individuals were given a cover letter that included a brief introduction of myself and a summary of the research project as well as a copy of the questionnaire. Within the letter was an explanation of the purpose and goals of the research as well as an explanation of efforts made to ensure the confidentiality of the participant. Copies of the cover letter and questionnaire are contained in the appendix.

Also included in the cover letter was an explanation of personal options offered to protect participants from emotional or psychological harm they might experience as a result of participating in the research. All participation was voluntary. Due to the nature of the

research and the issues surrounding Take Back the Night events, it was anticipated that the participants of such activities would include survivors of rape or sexual assault. Subjects who have been a victim of sexual assault were asked to recall their own personal experiences and might, therefore, incur psychological or emotional risks. If eradicating the stigma and guilt placed on survivors and aiding in their healing process are possible benefits to survivors, their representative voice is an important element of this research. The proposed benefits of Take Back the Night to survivors justifies the need for them to be included in the research in order to prove any such benefits are achieved. All respondents were given the option not to answer any question that they felt was inappropriate or that made them uncomfortable. Every participant was also given the option to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the research project at any time. Participants were also given the choice of anonymity. Respondents had the option of submitting the questionnaire anonymously or providing personal information if they wished to receive a copy of the statistical results of the questionnaire. Furthermore, confidentiality was also maintained by keeping the written questionnaires and also any notes or audiotapes made during personal interviews in a secure location. Respondents to the questionnaire via e-mail were protected by a password needed to access my e-mail account.

No real names will be used within this written material unless deemed to be an integral part of the research and with permission granted by the subject. One subject, already mentioned in the previous chapter, was identified as an important resource for this thesis and was willing to be identified. All but two of the participants provided personal information, such as name, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address, if applicable, expressing their willingness to answer follow-up questions or interest in receiving a copy of

the statistical results of the survey. Because participants were given the option of anonymity, I chose to apply an identification number to each participant unless, as previously mentioned, referring to the participant by name would substantiate the research. In the following chapters, quotes from participants will be cited by their respective identification numbers.

Through personal contacts and acquaintances, questionnaires were distributed either directly to the research participants or indirectly by those participants who took extra questionnaires to give to other friends who had participated in Take Back the Night events. Thirty questionnaires were distributed in Ames, 23 of which were completed and returned. In Boone, the Dean of Students at ASU provided the contact information for Wallace, and a local mental health administrator and ASU graduate helped identify potential participants for the study. E-mails were then sent to 15 people, six of whom met the study criteria and agreed to participate. In addition, similar personal contacts were made through the internet with individuals who were identified as active members of the Take Back the Night movement. One such contact was a faculty advisor for the Take Back the Night at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. A request was sent out to approximately 40 people, including members of the Virginia Tech Take Back the Night committee and others who have worked on Take Back the Night events across the country. This request garnered only one completed and returned questionnaire.

Questionnaires were distributed shortly after the Take Back the Night rally in Ames, IA in April 1999. Questionnaires were also distributed at the Eighth International Conference on Sexual Assault and Harassment on Campus in Orlando, Florida in October 1998. Participants of this conference included students, faculty, and staff from colleges and universities located in the United States and Canada, plus a variety of national, educational,

community, and governmental organizations. Five questionnaires were distributed at the conference; three of which were completed and returned. The distribution of all questionnaires and the personal interviews were conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined by the Human Subjects Committee at Iowa State University.

There were a total of 27 questionnaires collected and eight interviews conducted. Of these 35 participants, 29 were female, five were male, and one identified as transgender. A majority of the participants, 71.4 %, were 21-30 years of age. The breakdown for the remaining participants is as follows: 20 years of age or younger (5.7%), 31-40 years of age (11.4%), or 41 years of age or older (11.4%). Twenty-six participants self-identified as heterosexual, two as lesbians, three as bi-sexual, one as queer, and three did not answer. Twenty-two participants identified as White, three as African American, one as European American, one as East European Jewish, two as Arab American, and six did not answer. Twenty-one participants (60%) attended a Take Back the Night rally in Ames, IA, six (17.1%) in Boone, NC, seven (20%) in places other than Boone or Ames, and one (2.9%) did not specify the location. The following is the breakdown of the seven who attended an event in a place other than Ames, IA or Boone, NC: one in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; one in Ann Arbor, Michigan; one at Radford University, Radford, Virginia; one at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa; one in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and, two at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio. The above information is based on the most recent rally and march they attended. A majority of the respondents (71.4%) have participated in more than one Take Back the Night event. Based on the number of participants who have attended more than one Take Back the Night event, it is fairly probable that those who responded to this study are likely to be committed to Take Back the Night.

While the research is based on a relatively small sample, the qualitative portions of the questionnaire and interview allow for responses to open-ended questions and more in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences. According to Rosenthal and Rosnow (1984),

The advantages of the typical interview is that it provides an opportunity to establish rapport with the respondent and to stimulate the trust and cooperation needed to probe sensitive areas. ... The obvious danger is that this also leaves more room for experimenter bias. (p. 128)

At the same time, the questionnaire also has its advantages. It provides the range, convenience, economy, and anonymity that the interview cannot.

The questionnaire was composed with both structured and unstructured items. Structured or close-ended items are "those with clear-cut response options" such as ranking and multiple-choice questions. Unstructured or open-ended items are "those that offer the respondents an opportunity to expand on their answers, to express feelings, motives, or behavior quite spontaneously" (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984, p. 130). According to Reinharz (1992) in her book Feminist Methods in Social Research, open-ended interviewing is "particularly important for the study of women because in this way learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether or having men speak for women" (p. 19). The combination of the interview and the questionnaire helps to increase validity and to compile a sample of participants in Take Back the Night activities. An important characteristic of a sample is its stability, meaning "all samples produced will yield essentially the same results" (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984, p. 156). For example, if the sample does not produce results relative to the purpose of the research, the sample may be too small. "In general, it can be said that, for any given degree of precision, the more

essentially alike the members of the population, the fewer of them need to be sampled” (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984, p. 156). It is difficult to establish the stability of this sample, and the lack of previous studies further complicates this issue. Thus, the small sample size should be noted as a limitation of this study. As previously mentioned, 60% of the research participants attended Take Back the Night events in Ames, therefore skewing the research data. With one area dominating, it can be difficult to generalize the information, but it should be noted that one-third of these participants also participated in events outside of Ames.

In addition, several different variables of this study will be compared to test their significance and independence of one another. Crosstabulation can investigate the notion of association and also of causation, meaning the values on one variable are expected to cause, predispose, or support a particular attribute on another variable. For example, comparisons can be made between survivors and others concerning how they ranked the most important aspects of Take Back the Night. Also, comparisons could be made between whether a participant would attend with a male and her attitudes towards men’s participation in Take Back the Night. Other comparisons will include participants’ expectations before attending their first event with their level of fulfillment after; participants’ level of awareness about sexual violence before their first event with their level of awareness after; participants’ level of empowerment before their first event with their level of empowerment after; and, whether gender, being a feminist, activist, or both, or being a survivor influenced the number of Take Back the Night events attended.

When crosstabulations are used, chi-square tests can be conducted to determine whether any significant relationships between these variables existed. Crosstabulation

“generates contingency tables for all pairs of variables that are [compared] along with a number of statistics showing the relationship between the variables in the table” (Tuckman, 1978, p. 295). Chi-square (χ^2) tests are one such statistic. “The presence or absence of independence between variables can be used to draw important conclusions” (Lapin, 1978, p. 497-498). Chi-square can determine whether or not certain variables are independent of one another. “The actual and expected frequencies must be compared so that the null hypothesis of independence can be accepted or rejected” (Lapin, 1978, p. 503). In other words, chi-square compares the actual frequencies to the expected frequencies to determine whether a significant difference exists. These tests determine the extent to which the observed vary or deviate from the expected. The bigger the sample size, the more reliable it is in determining a significant relationship. A small sample size makes it difficult to generalize the results of this research to other individuals who participate in Take Back the Night events. According to Lapin (1978), “In practice, the sample will be large enough when the *expected* frequencies for each cell value round to 5 or more” (p. 507). Because there may be a number of cells in the table where the expected value is five or fewer, the results in this research need to be interpreted cautiously.

For the purposes of this study, the .05 level of significance is used. Tuckman (1978) states,

When a researcher reports that the difference between two means is significant at the .05 level ($p < .05$), this means that the probability is less than 5 out of 100 that the difference is due to chance. ... The five percent level often is considered an acceptable level of confidence to reject the null hypothesis. (p. 250)

When referring to the table of chi-square values in Conducting Educational Research by Tuckman (1978), we find that with one degree of freedom, a relationship between two

variables is significant at the .05 level if the chi-square value (χ^2) is at least 3.841. If the probability is greater than .05, one accepts the null hypothesis and concludes independence between the variables. According to Tuckman (1978), degrees of freedom for a contingency table are determined by the following formula: (number of rows – 1) x (number of columns – 1).

It is also important to acknowledge any missing data concerns. Most missing data came from questions that targeted specific sub-categories of the group such as questions only for survivors or for those who attended the event(s) with a male. Another large category of missing data occurs in questions in which the participants were given “other” as a possible choice and then were asked to explain their answer. A majority of participants did not utilize this option. In general, few people typically did not provide answers to each question. As previously mentioned, while the sample is small, the qualitative data from the interviews and questionnaires will be used to support the quantitative side as will be reflected in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS OF INTERVIEWS/QUESTIONNAIRES

This chapter will examine the results of the interviews and questionnaires and will also include qualitative analysis such as quotes and statements from the participants to support the quantitative findings. While the sample is fairly small, the interviews and open-ended questions on the questionnaire enabled the participants to provide personal accounts of and opinions about their own Take Back the Night experience(s). This chapter will explore the participants' expectations of the event; whether these expectations were fulfilled; what, if any, benefits were gained from the event; any negative experiences; levels of knowledge and empowerment both before and after their first event; whether, from a survivor's perspective, it aided in their healing process; whether men participated in any of the activities; whether men should be allowed to participate in such events; and, the participants' rankings of the most important aspects of Take Back the Night.

Number Attended

As previously mentioned, a majority (71.4%) of the participants attended more than one Take Back the Night event. Of the 35 participants, ten (28.6%) have attended only one event, six (17.1%) have attended two events, 14 (40%) have attended three to five events, and five (14.3%) have attended six or more Take Back the Night events. Most of these events (71.5%) took place within the past five years. The participants' responses are based on their experiences at events held not only in the two focal cities, Ames, IA and Boone, NC, but also throughout the United States and Canada. The subjects participated in Take Back the Night activities in two countries, nine states, and 17 cities including Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Des Moines, IA; Athens, OH; Greensboro, NC; Princeton, NJ; Columbus, OH; Mankato, MN; San Francisco, CA; Ann Arbor, MI; Radford, VA; Minneapolis, MN;

Pullman, WA; Pella, IA; Gambier, OH; and Kent, OH. The selection of Take Back the Night events held on different college campuses and in different cities will offer a varied glimpse of the diversity this grass roots movement supports.

Participants were also asked to identify themselves by gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and whether they define themselves as feminists or activists or both. This variable was compared to the number of Take Back the Night events the participants attended to determine if there was a relationship between these two variables. Of the 14 participants who labeled themselves as a feminist, only five (35.7%) have attended three or more events. On the other hand, of the 14 participants who labeled themselves as both a feminist and an activist, ten (71.4%) have attended three or more events. Participants who identified themselves as both feminists and activists were more likely to attend multiple Take Back the Night events.

Expectations

One element of Take Back the Night researched was what, if any, expectations did participants have of the event and, perhaps more importantly, whether these expectations were fulfilled. Were there certain things the participants hoped to gain from their involvement? In questions 8 through 10, participants of both the interviews and questionnaires were asked whether they had certain expectations about attending their first Take Back the Night Rally and March and if so, whether these expectations were fulfilled. They were provided with a list of seven options to choose from or they could offer their own answer. Because participants might have several expectations of the event, they could check as many as applied to their own personal experience. Twenty-five (71.4%) had expectations, eight (22.9%) did not have any expectations, and two (5.7%) somewhat had expectations. Of

the 25 who had expectations, each person checked at least two or more categories in question 9. The most common expectation was protesting violence against women. The other notable expectations were empowerment and a sense of community. Only 5.7% expected to protest pornography; this was completely opposite of the goal of the first U.S. national Take Back the Night Rally in San Francisco in the late 70's. One participant also provided the additional expectation of receiving support from the community in addressing the issues of violence against women. Of those participants who had expectations when attending their first rally, two felt that their expectations were somewhat fulfilled and one felt that her expectations were not fulfilled. All the rest felt their expectations were fulfilled. Table 4.1 summarizes the participants' expectations.

Table 4.1. Summary of participants' expectations

Expectations	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Empowerment	19	54.3%
Become More Involved	10	28.6%
Feel a Sense of Community	17	48.6%
Protest Pornography	2	5.7%
Gain Knowledge/Information	11	31.4%
Feel Safer	5	14.3%
Protest Violence Against Women	24	68.6%
Other	1	2.9%
No Expectations	8	22.9%

No expectations

Some participants had no expectations going into the event and that was the reason they attended. Of the thirty-five participants, eight (22.9%) said they had no expectations at all. One participant stated, “I was just kind of caught up in the movement to be a part of it but not with any expectations. I had no expectations, that’s just the reason I went” (#1). For others, while they didn’t have any specific expectations, it was a powerful and memorable experience. One participant, who marched in both San Francisco and Ames, wrote, “While I didn’t have any expectations, it was incredible to walk down Haight Street [San Francisco] at night with thousands of other women. The funniest part was the ‘poor’ guy alone at a bus stop, boy did he shrink into the corner and look frightened when he saw us coming!” (#6). Another participant in a Boone event stated, “I had never been to one so I didn’t know what to expect. ... I know they wanted to teach us awareness and safety, but I wasn’t real sure what it would be like. I was pleasantly surprised at the way I left feeling” (#7). A fourth participant who did not have any specific expectations stated that she “was empowered far beyond what I ever thought I could be” (#26). For others it was not a matter of being swept up in an event or movement but the curiosity of not knowing what the event would bring.

Some expectations

Some participants had basic perceptions of the event and what to expect. One male who attended events in both Boone and Greensboro, NC stated, “I really didn’t have any expectations other than that I was going to be part of something ... and that it was a statement to the community, for the community. The purpose was fairly implicit in that we were there to make a statement of solidarity against violence” (#13). Another participant who marched in Boone had basic expectations of the format of the evening’s events and

topic, but not of the content and outcome. She states, "I certainly didn't expect that it was going to be as powerful as it was and that there would be as many people as there was" (#14). Several others expressed the need to feel a connection with others and support from the community.

As mentioned earlier, the origination of the activities in Boone stemmed from the experiences of Jeni Gray and Leigh Cooper Wallace. As a survivor, Wallace attended the first Boone event with the specific expectations of becoming more involved, feeling a sense of community, and feeling safer. The expectations of her first Take Back the Night rally and the subsequent Walk for Awareness events differed based on her needs. The first event she attended was held only six days after her abduction and sexual assault. She explained her expectations as the following, "My first one I mainly wanted support. I wanted to see that people cared. ... I wanted to let them know this had happened and that it was awful but we still live in a great community. I believe in the community, I believe in the police and the males in this community" (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998). For the most part her expectations were only somewhat fulfilled and her first event was somewhat disappointing and frustrating. Perhaps because of the community climate surrounding the first Boone event back in 1989, this Take Back the Night was much more emotional, tense, and angry than what she expected or wanted. That event was

mostly women and it was more of an angry type feel – anger and confusion. It didn't turn out to be what I wanted it to be. ... People were telling their stories and blaming the police and blaming men. ... It did help to see that there were a lot of people there, but I felt like everyone was leaving with the wrong message. ... I kind of came away with a little more worry and doom. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

While her expectations weren't necessarily fulfilled with the first event, the following years

have been positive experiences that allowed her to “come away very hopeful and very motivated and feeling good” (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998).

The other participant, a man who also felt his expectations were only somewhat fulfilled, went into the event with the specific expectations of becoming more involved, gaining knowledge and information, and protesting violence against women. In response to whether these expectations were fulfilled he answered, “Yes and no. I don’t think I became more involved. I gained knowledge and to a certain extent I protested [but] beyond that I don’t think I became more involved. I didn’t do anything more than that” (#24). Another interesting point he made was that he felt his participation in this particular forum, in which he protested violence against women, served and raised the awareness of the others in attendance but not of those who were bystanders of or absent from the event.

While most people felt their expectations were fulfilled, one participant in the Ames Take Back the Night events did not. The participant, a female who did not have her expectations fulfilled, was expecting to be empowered, to become more involved, to feel a sense of community, to protest pornography, to feel safer, and to protest violence against women. She explained why she felt her expectations were not fulfilled: “I didn’t feel safer afterwards. In fact, walking there and home afterwards made me more afraid than I’ve ever felt before or since. I think that’s because I was hyper-aware of violence against women” (#19). For this participant, the message of the event made her overly aware of the violence against women in our society and made her “hyper-aware” of her own personal safety.

In comparing the 25 participants who had expectations before attending their first Take Back the Night event and whether these expectations were then fulfilled, 92% said that their expectations were fulfilled. Only two of the five men who participated in this study

had any expectations going into their first event. Their biggest expectation (40%) was protesting violence against women. None of the men expected to be empowered, protest pornography, or feel safer as a result of participating in Take Back the Night. Of the five women who expected to feel safer as a result of attending Take Back the Night, only one was a survivor. The biggest expectations for women were empowerment (62.1%), a sense of community (51.7%), and protesting violence against women (72.4%). Because of the small number of men who participated in this study, the sample is not large enough to use chi-square to compare gender with the individual's expectations for the event. However, as shown in Table 4.2, men and women do seem to have different expectations of Take Back the Night and they may leave the event with a different reality of what their participation in that event meant to them. Table 4.2 summarizes the participant's expectations by gender.

Table 4.2. Summary of participants' expectations by gender^a

Expectations ^b	Female	Male
Empowerment	62.1%	0.0%
Become More Involved	31.0%	20.0%
Feel a Sense of Community	51.7%	20.0%
Protest Pornography	6.9%	0.0%
Gain Knowledge/Information	34.5%	20.0%
Feel Safer	17.2%	0.0%
Protest Violence Against Women	72.4%	40.0%
No Expectations	17.2%	60.0%

^a N=34; Females=29, Males=5; one person not included identified as transgender

^b answered yes to the particular expectation

Benefits

Participants were not only asked whether they had specific expectations of Take Back the Night and other similar events, but also were asked whether they benefited from the event and, if so, what was especially beneficial for them. Once again participants were provided with a list of seven options to choose from or they could offer their own answer. Because participants may have received several benefits from the event, they could check as many as applied to their own personal experience. Overwhelmingly, all 35 (100%) participants in the study felt that they benefited in some way from their participation in Take Back the Night. The most common benefits were a sense of community (74.3%) and protesting violence against women (77.1%). Other notable benefits were the sense of empowerment (60%) and the gaining of knowledge or information (45.7%). The three areas that most participants did not identify as beneficial were aiding in the healing process for survivors, protesting pornography, and feeling greater personal safety. Table 4.3 summarizes the participants' identification of various benefits received.

A participant in the Boone events stated, "It was beneficial for me to see everyone bond together over a certain issue and experience very powerful emotions together. [After] something horrible happened it was powerful for me to see the flip side, that there are good people and there are concerned people" (#1). For Wallace the event was beneficial from a survivor's point of view.

I think you're going to benefit from this and see that there are people out there who are trying to say that 'we're doing what we can and whether we do anything beyond today at least we're here supporting you.' ... You just feel closeness to a lot of people because everyone here is dealing with their own personal problems. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

The event has aided tremendously in her own healing process and given her a sense of

Table 4.3. Summary of benefits to participants

Benefits	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Sense of Empowerment	21	60.0%
Aided in Healing Process	8	22.9%
Felt a Sense of Community	26	74.3%
Protested Pornography	3	8.6%
Gained Knowledge/Information	16	45.7%
Felt Safer	5	14.3%
Protested Violence Against Women	27	77.1%
Other	5	14.3%

community. The sense of community was an important outcome of the Boone events.

For a male participant in the Boone events, his most important benefit was the understanding of the courage it takes for a survivor to speak out about her personal experience of violence. He stated,

[It] was very powerful to hear what she [Wallace] said and how she's overcome what has happened to her and that she's moved on. ... Hearing first hand her account of it [the abduction and sexual assault], how she's coped with it really made me aware of what it takes to get through something like that. (#3)

Another Boone participant stated, "I felt like the whole [ASU] campus was more aware. ... I think that especially the females knew they could count on each other. They made a bond by walking and listening to her [Wallace]" (#7). Another male participant in Boone said,

The most beneficial things were that what they seemed to do was to make women more generally aware [and] for awhile feel safer and gave a feeling of power to those who felt betrayed, which is another benefit. And for me also just being a part of the community was definitely a benefit. (#13)

Another person also makes reference to Wallace's presence as courageous and powerful.

Her willingness to turn [her experience] into really a positive opportunity for growth and change I think was probably the most significant thing I came away with. ... The numbers of people attending it was very powerful as well, I hadn't expected that, and just feeling that sense of community. (#14)

For those who attended the Take Back the Night events in Ames, a sense of community was also important. One woman said,

A sense of community and feeling that there were other women around campus who felt that issues were important, as I did. ... I think just going and having a sense of being able to do something, to react. There are so many negative things that happen to women that it was nice to go and have a positive. (#18)

Another Ames participant felt that one important benefit was demonstrating to the ISU community that "people were concerned about these issues and that these things happen in Ames" (#34). The same male who expressed his dissatisfaction with his desired expectations also felt that his participation was beneficial but only for a brief time. He states, "I gained knowledge and protested violence against women but on a limited basis" (#24). For him, this one time event was not enough to sustain the community involvement he expected beyond a one-time experience.

Two specific benefits examined were whether the participants received an increased level of knowledge, empowerment, or both through their participation in Take Back the Night events. In questions 15 and 16, participants were asked to define how aware or well informed they felt about issues related to sexual violence both before and after they attended their first event. When comparing these two variables, there was a significant difference. Those who were already very well informed didn't learn much new information, but those with less knowledge did. Again, we find that with two degrees of freedom a relationship between variables is significant at the .05 level if the chi-square value (χ^2) is at least 5.991.

In this comparison, $\chi^2 = 10.591$ with a $p = .005$ suggesting a statistically meaningful relationship. Only two (18.2%) of the eleven participants who were very well informed before the event said they were more informed than previously, while 63.2% of those somewhat informed and 100% of those not very informed before the event said they were more informed than previously. Two cells of the table have expected values of less than five so results must be interpreted with caution. However, it seems that for those participants who were not well informed initially, attending Take Back the Night made them better informed about issues related to sexual violence than they were before they attended.

In questions 18 and 19, participants were asked to define how empowered they felt about issues related to the prevention of sexual violence both before and after they attended their first event. When comparing these two variables, there was also a significant difference, but again the expected number in some of the cells was under five so the results must be interpreted with caution. Those who already felt very empowered gained some additional empowerment, but those less empowered gained significant feelings of empowerment from their first Take Back the Night event. Again we find that with two degrees of freedom a relationship between the variables is significant at the .05 level if the chi square value (χ^2) is at least 5.991. In this comparison, $\chi^2 = 7.803$ with a $p = .020$. Two (33.3%) of the six participants who felt very empowered before the event said they were more empowered than previously, while 73.3% of those somewhat empowered and 92.9% of those not very empowered before the event said they were more empowered than previously. Twenty-six (74.3%) of the 35 participants said they were more empowered after the event than previously and the other 25.7% said they were at about the same level of empowerment. Most participants reported that attending Take Back the Night provided them with an

increased level of empowerment related to the prevention of sexual violence.

For a survivor who has attended more than five Take Back the Night events in Ohio, her participation as a survivor was also particularly beneficial for her. She states, “[It] serves as recognition of being a ‘survivor’ with other survivors – allows a safe place to articulate feelings and process emotions” (#32). As demonstrated above, each individual not only had specific expectations, but also received different as well as similar benefits from participation in Take Back the Night. The most common benefits were a sense of community, an opportunity for protesting violence against women, an increased sense of empowerment, and the acquisition of knowledge, information, or both.

Negative Experiences

Another element of Take Back the Night that was researched was what, if any, negative experiences participants had while taking part in these activities. Were there certain things that bothered or disturbed the participants about the event? In question 12, respondents to both the interviews and questionnaires were asked what those negative experiences were and were provided with a list of nine options to choose from or they could provide their own answer. Because participants may have had several different negative experiences during the event(s), they could check as many as applied to their own personal experience. Of the 35 participants, 12 (34.3%) expressed the lack of ethnic diversity as negative, nine (25.7%) experienced the presence of harassers/hecklers, and nine (25.7%) said the lack of men bothered or disturbed them. Other notable answers were lack of participation (17.1%) and four (11.4%) mentioned negative experiences other than the possibilities provided. Six (17.1%) said they did not have any negative experiences. These will be discussed in detail in the following section. Table 4.4 summarizes the participants’ negative

experiences with Take Back the Night events.

Table 4.4. Summary of negative experiences

Negative Experiences	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of Ethnic Diversity	12	34.3%
Lack of Forum for Survivors	1	2.9%
Inclusion of Men	1	2.9%
Presence of Harassers/Hecklers	9	25.7%
Lack of Participation	6	17.1%
Lack of Men	9	25.7%
Exclusion of Men	2	5.7%
Too Heterosexist	2	5.7%
Overall Message	2	5.7%
Other	4	11.4%
No Negative Experiences	6	17.1%

Lack of ethnic diversity

The biggest thing that bothered participants about their respective Take Back the Night events was the lack of ethnic diversity. The feminist movement has often been criticized for its narrow focus on the oppression of women, lacking discourse on the multiple oppressions of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and heterosexism. Patricia Hill Collins, author of Black Feminist Thought (1991), states, “even today African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian-American women criticize the feminist movement and its scholarship for being racist and overly concerned with white, middle-class women’s issues” (p. 7). The

Take Back the Night movement, a form of feminist social activism, has garnered many of the same criticisms. Twelve (34.3%) participants felt that the lack of ethnic diversity was problematic. An Ames participant described it as “a very white, middle-class group going through the streets” (#18).

Presence of harassers or hecklers

Another common complaint (25.7%) was the presence of harassers or hecklers, mainly on the march route. This problem was not unique to one particular city. Along with the presence of hecklers came, for some, the negative feeling of being on display as if part of a parade or freak show. A participant in an Athens, Ohio Take Back the Night event recalled her negative experience as “somewhat uncomfortable for me as we walked through the Greek housing area. Many of the fraternity men were watching, so it felt like a parade” (#29). One Ames participant stated,

There were a couple of men from some fraternities that were out there. I’m not sure I would call them hecklers but they weren’t helping. I don’t remember what their comments were now but they were rather rude comments. They obviously didn’t get it. I remember more being just stared at. They weren’t really with us or against what we were doing but that we were kind of a freak show wandering through the streets. (#18)

Another female Ames participant was “disappointed in hecklers on campus and when we went through the Greek system” (#34). Several years ago, hecklers were a significant problem during the 1994 Ames Take Back the Night. That year, as the march passed through a predominantly Greek area of campus, several individuals yelled inappropriate remarks such as “No means yes,” “Sluts,” and “I’ll screw you all” setting off a volley of letters to the editor in the school newspaper between members of various fraternities and the Take Back the Night event coordinator (Eickholt, 1994, p. 4).

Lack of men

Another common complaint (25.7%) for many was not the inclusion of men, but the lack of male participants in these events. A female Boone participant stated, "It was mostly females and to me [men] needed to be there too just as much to understand" (#7). A male Boone participant stated,

The only thing that concerned me was the lack of male presence there. ... The reality is we're not going to make change until we continue to focus on the person who is the aggressor. Atmosphere and feeling was, for a big part, anti-male for a number of people, but a number of people also were more of the attitude that we need to change not just this event, but a more global part of the spectrum. (#13)

As previously mentioned, the ratio of women to men at recent Take Back the Night events in Ames has been roughly 5:1, while the ratio in Boone is more evenly split.

Lack of participation

Another problem was the lack of participation by campus and community members as a whole. Four of the six participants who cited lack of participation as problematic attended Ames events. The average attendance for Ames Take Back the Night events is 400-500 participants, based on a combined campus and community population of almost 49,000 people. On the other hand, the attendance over the past few years in Boone has averaged around 1,000 participants for a town almost half the size of Ames.

Other negative experiences

There were four participants who cited negative experiences other than those provided on the questionnaire. Previously mentioned was one participant from Ohio who was not only bothered by the presence of hecklers but was also uncomfortable with the feeling of being watched as if it was not a march of protest, but a parade (#29). A female participant in a San Francisco Take Back the Night felt that the event lacked a forum for men

only. She wrote,

It kind of bothered me that men were not allowed on the march although they did participate in the rally. The more I think about it the more I think the march should probably be women only and that there should be some male only events after the rally until the women get back. I don't think men who are interested in these issues get a chance to talk together very often and I think it could be a really good opportunity for learning. (#6)

A male Ames participant was bothered by the perceived expectations by the women of the men. He stated,

The only thing that really bothered me was how I was expected to react as a man. The expectations of being at rapt attention because if I showed myself to be bored I didn't want to make anyone feel I was belittling the process. I felt I was more on display as a man. I felt like I had certain expectations put upon me because of my gender. (#24)

Finally, a participant in Mankato, MN Take Back the Night events was disturbed by the format of the march. "In some of the marches, there was an order to who walked where. There was some tension about men walking behind. Some women seemed defensive and upset. There was always tension between separatist and inclusion of supportive men" (#27).

Overall message

Only two participants, both of Boone, felt the overall message of the event was disturbing or not what was expected by the participants or intended by the planners. This is noteworthy because these problems arose the first year of the Boone event, originally called Take Back the Night. Rather than it being a positive consciousness raising experience, it became one of negativity. One female Boone participant stated that there were some speakers who were "very anti-security, anti-police, anti-law enforcement of any kind. Rather than making it 'what can we do and here's a powerful message,' it was more of a blaming kind of thing. ... It wasn't what I felt I was there for" (#1). Wallace's negative experiences

also came during the first Take Back the Night event held less than a week after her kidnapping and assault. Just as another Boone participant stated, Wallace also said the event was “anti-male, anti-Boone, anti-police. People were bashing the police and saying they weren’t doing their job [and that] this town was turning into a bad town and I didn’t believe any of those things.” Wallace felt the “real, real feminist approach” gave her a negative opinion of the message and meaning of Take Back the Night. For her the term “take back the night” had certain implications that didn’t fit most people’s experiences, including her own.

I felt like nothing had really been taken from me that couldn’t also be taken from a man. The presence of the signs and their messages were negative. Maybe it’s that ‘take back the night’ sends the wrong message that it’s only at night when bad things happen. It could happen anytime. That this safe community [Boone] is changing and we’re no longer safe here and I didn’t want to give that message. I still knew that this was a great community to live in and I didn’t want this to destroy the image of this community. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Wallace not only struggled with the message of that first event, but she continues to struggle with her own messages each time she speaks at what are now called Walk for Awareness, instead of Take Back the Night, events. Wallace has spoken every year for the past 10 years, but 1999 marked the end of her speaking appearances.

Nothing bothers me about the walk itself but I guess maybe where I’m feeling disconnected from it is that the talks have to be more about date-rape and that’s what I try to gear my stuff to. It’s just a little different from what I experienced but yet I can still say ‘don’t feel guilty, don’t feel bad’ because there was no question if I was going to feel guilty or ashamed or that I had caused it. I didn’t get any of those feelings from anybody because everyone knew that I had been taken off the street. I feel in some way that I can’t totally connect with people who are dealing with feelings of guilt. ... I don’t feel like there are a lot of people out there who can say I went through what you went through. But maybe my message is still helping those who are dealing with guilt or being ashamed or that they can’t tell anybody. Maybe they’re out there saying ‘of course you’re not dealing with guilt because you were raped by someone you didn’t know.’ Is my message helping a college community? That’s what concerns me about coming up with a message. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

It was important to note not only the positive expectations of and benefits provided by Take Back the Night events but also the negative incidents individuals experienced. The most common things that bothered or disturbed participants were the lack of ethnic diversity, the presence of harassers or hecklers, the lack of male participants, and the overall lack of participation.

Survivor's Perspective

Another element of Take Back the Night that was researched was whether participating in a Take Back the Night event(s) was a healing or emotionally satisfying experience for survivors of sexual violence. In question 20, participants who identified themselves as survivors were then asked to explain how the event aided their healing process and if it did not, why not. Participants were also asked in question 21 whether, as survivors of sexual violence, they felt that adequate information to assist in the healing process was provided. Both questions were open-ended questions allowing the survivors to put their feelings and opinions in their own words. Of the 35 participants, 12 (34.3%) identified themselves as survivors of sexual violence. Of these 12, eight (66.6 %) felt it was a healing or emotionally satisfying experience, two (16.7%) felt it was not, and another two (16.7%) felt it was somewhat satisfying. The following section will explore how their participation in Take Back the Night events affected their healing process.

According to Judith Herman in Trauma and Recovery (1997), recovery and the healing process is “based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections” (p. 133). Establishing safety and restoring power, control, trust, identity, and intimacy are also important elements within the healing process. The survivor then remembers and reconstructs the trauma integrating it as a part of her or his life story,

enabling the survivor to develop a new self and new relationships. The final stage is finding commonality between the survivor and the community. "The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience" (Herman, 1997, p. 214). The survivors in this study described how their participation in events such as Take Back the Night facilitated elements of this healing process.

For many of the survivors who participated in this research, the sense of community, support, and affirmation was an important element of their own healing process. One participant said, "The first event was powerful because I felt so isolated. To find community and affirmation was healing. Many years later, speaking and naming what happened to me continues to soothe the deep wounds" (#4). An Ames participant wrote, "I knew I was no longer alone in my healing process. The sense of community was very strengthening for me personally" (#30). A participant in a Michigan event felt her participation was important because, "In my experience of violence, I was not believed by the first people I told. The sense of support was helpful" (#11). The supportive, public forum was also important to others. A participant in Des Moines events said, "I began to feel I was not dirty and that I nor anyone deserves to be violated" (#26). An Ames participant stated, "[It] gave me a forum to express my rage and politicize violence" (#5). An Ohio participant said, "I found it satisfying to hear other stories and to tell my story to a supportive group" (#10). Another Ohio participant wrote,

[It's] not always the easiest thing, but it's a 'safer' time to talk about the issues and you don't feel so alone. ... It's truly the only time to publicly act like a 'survivor' and not like a victim ... at least it always felt that way to me. After it was all over it was quiet and secretive again, and something people don't really want to talk about. (#32)

A Washington participant wrote, "I think the real healing is when you become involved with the process. Attending the first one was the easiest step" (#31). Wallace also felt her participation in these events aided in her healing process and expressed many of the same sentiments:

It's a healing experience. ... People kept coming up to me afterward and telling me how much I helped them and while I was glad I did that for them, they don't realize how much it helped me. When you've survived something like this, it gets to the point where the people around you don't really want to talk about it anymore. Not that they don't care, but it's painful for them too and painful for them to think that you're still dealing with it so it's nice to go somewhere where people are thinking about it and you're talking about it and it's ok for you to talk about it. It gave me a chance to reflect on it some more and each year I reflect on how far I've come in that year. Having a place where it's ok to talk about it and then having people tell me how much what I've said helped them helps me justify why this happened to me. This happened to me for a reason. People thank me for sharing my story and tell me they admire me. When my family and my husband go it's their time to let me know they haven't forgotten about this. We can talk about it very comfortably but it's their time to let me know I have their support all the time. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Wallace also believes that it is important to provide additional information for other survivors, friends, and family members who may be dealing with violence related issues. In Boone, a number of resource people, such as student services, the district attorney, and law enforcement attend the events. "They show they're aware that these things do happen and that they're going to be as supportive as they can be" (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998). It is also important for Wallace to publicly thank the campus and community members who assisted her and let others know that they are available and they do care.

Whenever I give my speech I include all the different people that helped me – the counselors at ASU, Barbara Daye, the police, the district attorney, the sheriff's department, OASIS, all the groups that are out there willing to help and that helped me. I think that's why I recovered as well as I have because so many people reached out to me and I urge others to please reach out to them. (L. Wallace, personal

communication, August 12, 1998)

On the contrary, there were others who felt their participation in such events did not provide a healing or emotionally satisfying experience. A female who participated in events both in San Francisco and Ames explained her feelings as such, "Even though I know differently, I still *feel* like Take Back the Night is about walking the streets at night, and about strangers, not about acquaintance rape" (#6). For her, the message Take Back the Night sends is a misleading one, implying that most sexual assaults take place at night and by strangers, rather than in the victim's own home and by a friend. This person also stated that there were no additional materials or information, such as resources, support groups, or counseling services provided, but if there had been, she would not have taken any. Another participant wrote, "I do not feel that one gets 'over it.' You spend the rest of your life integrating the experience(s) and engaged in a healing process" (#25). For her, the healing process is an on-going, life-long progression that comes from the individual's own inner experiences, not from a single activity or event.

There were two participants who felt that participating in Take Back the Night was only somewhat healing or an emotionally satisfying experience. An Ames participant wrote, "It was emotionally satisfying but not healing. It just didn't make me feel any different personally" (#28). While this individual found the event to be satisfactory from an emotional perspective, similar to the previous person, she too felt it did not contribute to her own healing process. In an opposite viewpoint, another individual found her participation to be difficult emotionally, but it strengthened her personally. She stated, "It was difficult to relive the experience, but I felt stronger about it days later" (#31). To determine whether participating in a Take Back the Night event(s) was a healing or emotionally satisfying

experience for survivors of sexual violence, it was crucial to research these events from a survivor's perspective. Many of the survivors who participated in this research reported that the sense of community, support, and affirmation was an important element of their own healing process.

Whether a participant identified himself or herself as a survivor was then compared with the number of events attended to determine whether a relationship exists between these two variables. Of the 35 participants, 12 self-identified as survivors and 23 did not. It is possible that some of the latter may indeed be survivors but did not wish to self-identify as such. When comparing being a survivor with the number of events attended, there was a significant difference. Survivors attended more Take Back the Night events than the other participants. We find that with one degree of freedom a relationship between variables is significant at the .05 level if the chi-square value (χ^2) is at least 3.841. In this comparison, $\chi^2 = 6.209$ with a $p = .013$. A majority of the self-identified survivors (83.3%) attended three or more events, while only 39.1% of the other participants attended three or more events. There is a relationship between whether one is a survivor and the number of events that individual has participated in. Survivors are likely to attend more Take Back the Night events than the other participants.

Men's Involvement

The final and perhaps most controversial element of Take Back the Night that was researched was the participants' attitudes and beliefs about the involvement of men in these activities. Do men have a role in this movement and does the inclusion of men in these events help the movement achieve its ultimate goals? What were the participants' personal opinions and feelings about men being involved in their respective Take Back the Night

events? In question 6, both the men and women were asked whether they attended the event with anyone. In question 7, female participants were asked whether they attended the event with a male and if so, what was their relationship to him. The women who did not attend with a male were also asked if they would they be willing to do so in future events. Of the 35 total participants, 30 (85.7%) attended the event(s) with someone. Of the 30 women surveyed, ten (28.6%) attended at least one event with a male(s), such as a boyfriend, husband, brother, friend, father, roommate, son, student, or staff member. Only two (5.7%) of the 30 women indicated that they did not and would not attend a Take Back the Night event with a male. Their answers will be addressed in the following section.

In questions 24 through 27, participants of both the interviews and the questionnaires were asked in-depth questions about the participation of men in Take Back the Night activities. This included closed-ended questions in which the participants were asked to agree or disagree with a set of statements about why men should or should not be allowed to participate in Take Back the Night. Also included was an open-ended question in which the participants were given the opportunity to further explain their personal beliefs about the involvement of men in such activities. Question 24 asks whether men helped plan the rally, the march, or both, attended the rally, spoke at the rally, or participated in the march. A majority (45.7%) of the participants did not know whether men helped plan the events, but 31 (88.6%) said men attended their respective rally, 20 (57.1%) said men spoke at their rally, and 30 (85.7%) said men participated in their march. Table 4.5 summarizes men's participation in the various Take Back the Night events.

In question 25, the participants were given a set of reasons why some believe that men should participate in Take Back the Night. They were provided with a list of four

Table 4.5. The involvement of men

Did men...	Yes		No		Don't Know		No Answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
help plan the rally/march	11	31.4%	7	20.0%	16	45.7%	1	2.9%
attend the rally	31	88.6%	4	11.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
speak at the rally	20	57.1%	10	28.6%	4	11.4%	1	2.9%
participate in the march	30	85.7%	4	11.4%	1	2.9%	0	0.0%

options to agree or disagree with or they could choose neither if they were unsure. The four reasons given why men should participate include: for the prevention of violence, to educate other men, to increase awareness within the community, and to increase the awareness of men's own personal behaviors or beliefs. Twenty-nine (82.9%) participants agreed that the participation of men is necessary for the prevention of violence against women; 32 (91.4%) participants agreed that men should participate in order to educate other men; 31 (88.6%) agreed that the participation of men will help increase the awareness of violence against women within the community; and, 29 (82.9%) agreed that men should participate in order to increase the awareness of their own personal behaviors and/or beliefs towards sexual violence. Table 4.6 summarizes the participants' opinions whether the participation of men is necessary.

This section of questions generated the most variation, both written and verbal, about participants' experiences with and thoughts about Take Back the Night. The notion of men needing to participate in Take Back the Night for the prevention of violence at both the community and societal level was an important issue for many. A male Boone participant said,

Table 4.6. Men should participate in Take Back the Night

The participation of men is necessary...	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure		No Answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
for the prevention of violence	29	82.9%	2	5.7%	4	11.4%	0	0.0%
to educate other men	32	91.4%	1	2.9%	2	5.7%	0	0.0%
to increase awareness within the community	31	88.6%	2	5.7%	2	5.7%	0	0.0%
to increase awareness of their own personal behaviors and/or beliefs	29	82.9%	1	2.9%	4	11.4%	1	2.9%

I strongly believe that men should be there. The more men that are there, the more they can educate other men and the more they are educating themselves, which all goes to preventing further violence. I'm not the sort of person to cast aside someone's fears, but just being unaware may make other men feel that the fears women have are silly or unwarranted. (#3)

An Ohio participant wrote, "I think that men need to be involved in the movement to stop perpetration of violence and educate their peers" (#10).

Men can not only aid the education and prevention aspect of sexual violence, but they can also serve as allies in the war against it. An Iowa participant wrote, "Men are an important component to the discussion of sexual violence. Men are and can be effective allies" (#4). An Ames participant also wrote in agreement, "Women cannot end sexual violence alone. We need to start with men" (#8). Another female Ames participant wrote, "Men are affected by violence against women also, if in a different way, and should be able to express their commitment to women's safety" (#19). A male Ames participant also felt men should be allowed to participate, but cautioned, "I think that men must be involved but should not take over. Too often men either take or are placed in positions of control over women" (#9).

Several participants also felt that men have a place in the individual's healing process

as well. A Des Moines participant wrote, "Overall, I believe that men should be a part of the healing process to help restore trust and respect not only for women, but for themselves"

(#26). For Wallace, the men in her life played a significant role in her recovery process and she is grateful that they were able to be there. She stated,

In my recovery, I relied on a lot of people, a lot of men too. I think for me to feel stronger, I have to feel good about the men in my life and the men who are around me in this community. If I feel like I'm surrounded by a bunch of good men, then it restores my faith in men and I think that's why I never mistrusted men after this happened. I know that I'm not going to blame all of mankind because of what this one person did to me. So if I feel like I'm surrounded by men that care, men that are going to offer me support if I want it, then that gives me more empowerment and makes me feel stronger. I know that I would not have recovered from this and I would not have had this empowerment and this feeling of confidence and security if it weren't for the people around me. I don't feel like I need them to feel safe, but they do make me feel stronger and more confident. If I have men around me at the walk and men are speaking, it restores my faith in men that most men are like the people at the walk. If men couldn't have been there, I think of all the people who wouldn't have been there – my dad, my husband, my son, my counselor, the police, the district attorney, and the sheriff. All these are people who came up and put their arms around me and did everything they could. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Others discussed the importance of the involvement of men in the Take Back the

Night movement on a much broader societal level. An Ames participant wrote,

Violence against women is not just a women's issue and because this is a patriarchal society, men *have* to be involved if things are ever going to change. Men need to hear how this affects them in order to dispel the myths that women cause sexual assault, women should fix it themselves, and that all men are pigs. (#34)

Another female Ames participant concurred writing,

I think Take Back the Night rallies and marches are absolutely essential in our society. I am happy when important connections are made to foster increased participation and community support. I do hope that stereotypes and misconceptions about the event continue to be dispelled and our society continues to grow and evolve to the point where violence against women starts to decrease but, unfortunately it will never disappear because of the power of patriarchy. (#22)

A female participant from Boone who agreed with all four of the statements supporting the

inclusion of men said,

I think excluding men is only going to foster more the sense of alienation between the sexes. I think we need to learn how to live together harmoniously and I think women and men need to learn how to communicate better with each other. The fact of life is that we need to live together in society so I think preventing or consciously excluding men from these events would be a disservice to both men and women and might just breed more of a sense of alienation and disconnection and deprive men of the opportunity to learn about this and might even perpetuate the myth that all men are like this. (#14)

A male Boone participant shared a similar view stating,

Certainly this is an issue that has to be dealt with. If we are to evolve as people, the violence has got to stop. With the issue you're talking about, my feeling has been that if we're going to make a difference in violence against women then it's men that have to participate too. They have a responsibility because they are the ones who are doing it. (#13)

Many also discussed the idea that the participation of men will help increase not only the community's awareness of violence against women, but also awareness of men's own personal behaviors and understanding. Wallace felt that it was important for men to be there to educate not only themselves, but also other men, in working towards the prevention of violence against women. She stated,

To educate men, especially freshmen men coming in to college is important. They need to know they may put themselves in a situation that they may not have permission to be in. Educating young guys coming into college, I think it's very important for them to know especially about date rape, that it is a crime, and it does have a lasting impact. ... Usually when strangers/people come up and talk to me at the end, it's guys that say 'you are so strong to do that and I have so much admiration for you.' To know that I have an impact on them is extremely important. They take it very seriously and their presence there and them talking makes me feel stronger. At least the men that are there are going to reflect on violence towards all people and maybe women especially and are going to think about ways in which they've maybe been out of line or ways they can prevent themselves from being out of line. There may also be men dealing with a girlfriend or a mother or a sister who had been a victim. I think the men are learning that this is something that is serious, that is important. You come away thinking they're going to do what they can from now on to curb violence or to treat women with more respect. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Another Boone participant echoed Wallace's statement by agreeing that it was important for men to be there because if they do have inappropriate behaviors or beliefs, they need to be made aware of them (#7). Wallace also went on to say,

I talk to the men about their attitudes and their behaviors and how those behaviors are affecting women. I think it's extremely important for men to be there because if we're talking about rape, it's the men that are dealing with the issues that are causing these behaviors. By men being at this walk, it forces them to reflect on their behaviors and how their behaviors affect other people. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

Others felt that besides aiding in the prevention, education, and healing process, men can also be of assistance by providing support. A male Ames participant stated, "I think men should not be there only if they're asked not to be, honoring the request of women. I think men have plenty to offer in the cause of violence against, not only women, but everybody" (#24). A male Boone participant shared similar feelings.

By educating men about violent crimes against women it is a preventative action, but I also wanted to increase my own personal awareness about the issue. By going with my girlfriend, I really thought it was important for me to attend with her to let her know that if she were to become a victim of such a crime, [I would] be there for her and be a part of her support system. (#3)

For Wallace, having that participation and support system from her father, brother, and husband were extremely important. She states,

My reason is that the men in my life, my father, my brother, my husband, were so deeply affected by what happened to me. My husband had a lot of anger and a lot of mistrust for a long time. My father had a lot of guilt feelings that he, being a military officer, had not taught me self-defense. This violent crime had a huge impact [on them], and I know [participating] helps them. It helps in their healing, plus when they're there it reaffirms their support for me. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

A female Boone participant also felt that it was important for men to participate in the events in order to

gain some empowerment for themselves, to help them feel empowered over some of their own issues of being friends or significant others of victims or victims themselves, and to help themselves understand everything that is involved – the feelings, the issues, and the psychological aspects. I think that it's a support for women to see that men are concerned about preventing violence, increasing awareness, and wanting to empower people against [violence]. (#1)

While many were quite certain of the value of the participation of men in Take Back the Night events, there were others who felt that men did not and should not have a role in these activities, and then there were others who were torn between the two views.

In question 26, the participants were given a set of reasons why some believe that men should not participate in Take Back the Night. They were provided with a list of three options to agree or disagree with or they could choose neither if they were unsure. The three reasons given why men should not participate include: it (men's involvement) diminishes the empowerment process for women, it changes the focus from women to men, and it questions women's ability to have control over their own personal safety. Six (17.1%) participants agreed that the participation of men diminishes the empowerment process for women; two (5.7%) agreed that men's participation changes the focus from women to men; and, five (14.3%) agreed that the participation of men questions women's ability to have control over their own personal safety. Table 4.7 summarizes the participants' opinions of why men should not participate.

One of the two women who felt men did not and should not participate in Take Back the Night wrote, "because women have few safe spaces in this world to call their own, we need them [safe spaces] and Take Back the Night is one of them" (#2). The other, a woman from Ohio, wrote,

I've been involved where men are participants and where they are not. I am disturbed, as this is an empowerment, activist march – men can be involved in other

Table 4.7. Men should not participate in Take Back the Night

The participation of men ...	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Diminishes the empowerment process for women	6	17.1%	24	68.6%	5	14.3%	0	0.0%
changes the focus from women to men	2	5.7%	25	71.4%	7	20.0%	1	2.9%
questions women's ability to have control over their own personal safety	5	14.3%	25	71.4%	5	14.3%	0	0.0%

sessions that coincide with the march. I will never fully understand their inclusion in the march. How powerful and positive are my memories of women only marches, and the negativity when men joined in caused me to quit going for a couple of years. The tone, purpose, and effectiveness of the march – particularly with regards to empowerment – seemed to be gone. We live in such a crazy world these days; the fears of segregation and separatism have caused us to try to be inclusive in such a way that it doesn't always make sense ... Why is it considered appropriate for men to be involved in a march to empower women? It's never made full sense to me. Do I think men can be great allies and can make change to stop violence against women? Yes. Do I think men and boys are victims of sexual violence? Yes I do. At the same time, this is one event that takes place one day of the year. There's a whole lot more men could do that does not have to involve their participation in a Take Back the Night march. (#32)

A male Boone participant also discussed concern with the issue of empowerment, questioning whether men's involvement "can take away from the empowerment process for women. Some women may be more uncomfortable and those who are still living with these issues or those who are especially angry are probably dealing with some psychological and emotional issues" (#13). A female participant from Boone brought up a different concern that "[men] would use the forum as a way to spout their own issues off about it and maybe include things that women shouldn't do – thinking they're offering preventive measures but at the same time blaming" (#7).

In response to the statement about questioning women's ability to have control over

their own safety, an Ames participant disagreed, writing, "Women do not have the ability to control our safety (i.e. 'to keep ourselves from getting raped') and *that's* the problem. Men must, with women, agitate against rape to have any change on our culture as a whole" (#5). Another female Ames participant responded to the concern about men's participation changing the focus from women to men by saying, "That's where it belongs!" (#12).

While few were completely against men's involvement in the Take Back the Night movement, there were many who were either torn between the two views or believed men should participate but could also understand and respect the position of those who felt men did not have a place in these activities. A female Ames participant wrote,

I think that there should be a space for men in Take Back the Night, but I also know that what made me feel the most empowered about my first [San Francisco] march was that it was the first time in my life that I had been exclusively with thousands of women, no men present. It was a very powerful experience. More than anything else, I see Take Back the Night as a forum for women and men to get together and recognize publicly the shameful facts of sexual violence against women. I also see it as an excellent way for women to get experience in coalition building and activism. (#6)

Another female Ames participant conflicted about the issue shared similar concerns:

[Men's involvement] diminishes the empowerment process for women. It's like we need chaperones or protection to go do this. If I'm going out and talking about having control over my own personal safety, do I really need a man there telling me that 'yeah, you should have personal safety'? But I'm not sure it would change the whole focus of Take Back the Night. I think it's crucial for men to be involved in changing attitudes and beliefs about women, about violence, but I'm not exactly sure where that place should be. At the same time, men are usually the ones who perpetrate violence against women and so they need to be involved because until men start seeing that they shouldn't do this, then nothing is going to change. But at the same time, I want space to be able to feel empowered and to do things for myself. One possibility is men are at the rally then have their own activity while the women march and then meet up again at the social event afterwards. The other thing that comes to mind is that maybe they can go line the route of where the women are going to march. If they were out there yelling their support that would feel very different than having them escort us ... I can't actually say that I think men should not be at the rally or take a major role in it. I do think that they detract from the solidarity of

women. But, at the same time I'm not sure that the rally is a good place for women only space. I asked my husband to go so that he could understand some of the things that are important to me. I'm glad he went, because I knew that he was supportive of women's issues. (#18)

A male Boone participant who agreed with all of the statements supporting men's involvement understood why some women might feel that men should not participate. He stated,

I also recognize that if Take Back the Night is a specific event for the reason of empowering women, then maybe men shouldn't be there. If it's not about educating men and it's not about prevention so much as empowering women, then men shouldn't be there. At the same time, awareness and education and making a statement to other men can still be important. (#13)

A female Boone participant said, "The only thing that, by having men participate, may deter some women from participating [are those] who may be a little uncomfortable having men present but I don't think that's reason enough to exclude men" (#14).

Many others, women in particular, struggled with the issue of men's involvement believing men had a place but finding it difficult to define what that place was. A female Ames participant wrote, "I feel women should organize and plan Take Back the Night, but that men also need to own responsibility for social change. Men need to be part of the process, rather than isolated, therefore insulated, from it" (#16). Another Ames participant wrote,

I feel men should attend Take Back the Night to support women and to participate in stopping the violence. I don't feel male survivors of rape should speak at Take Back the Night since it is a forum for women. ... Since men are usually the perpetrators of violence against women, it is essential that men are also educated on this issue. Involving women only will provide a sense of empowerment and possibly facilitate healing; however, it will not stop the violence. Women and men must work together to accomplish that. (#23)

A Minnesota participant wrote,

I am really conflicted about this. I really believe men must hold themselves and others accountable for all violence against women. The purpose of Take Back the Night is really for women though. I think men should support it, but the focus really needs to be on women. (#27)

An Ohio participant wrote, "I think having men there who support the event and the empowerment of women is encouraging. At times, however, it can feel like we can't be 'safe' or empowered without men present/participating" (#29). Finally, while a female Ames participant felt that men should have a role in Take Back the Night events, she was not comfortable with using the term "agree" to explain her personal opinions about men's participation in these activities. She stated,

I can definitely see the reasoning behind these but I'm not sure 'agree' is the right word. I have really mixed feelings on whether or not men should participate. On the one hand, it makes sense having men participate in the rally and the march; it makes men visible and makes the issue more visible. Men can stand up and say this shouldn't happen. There are some problems I have though. If this is supposed to be a 'take back the night' rally for women that women are supposed to be able to go out and be in a space that they normally cannot be in, if men are there it's almost like they're there because we need them to go with us because we can't go by ourselves. I see the need to include men and I think that their presence is important, and yet I'm also torn because I want to be able to go out with a group of women and claim what I can't normally claim. The one night of the year I can safely do that, I'm not sure I want them [men] there or not. (#18)

In order to shed more light on the issue of the involvement of men in Take Back the Night, the variable of the female participants who said they would attend a future event with a male was compared to the variables from questions 25 and 26 regarding the reasons men should and should not participate in Take Back the Night. It is not surprising to note that of those who said they would attend with a male, 81% agreed that men's participation is necessary for the prevention of violence, 95.2% agreed that men's participation is necessary to educate other men, 90.5% agreed that men's participation is necessary to increase awareness within the community, and 90.5% agreed that men's participation is necessary to

increase awareness of their own behaviors or beliefs. Similarly, when comparing those who would attend with a male with their opinions why men perhaps should not participate, 66.7% disagreed with the statement that men's participation diminishes the empowerment process for women, 71.4% disagreed that it changes the focus from women to men, and 71.4% disagreed that it questions women's ability to have control over their own personal safety. Because so few people agreed with the statements as to why men perhaps should not attend Take Back the Night, and because few females said they would not attend the event with a male, the sample is not large enough to conduct chi-square tests comparing these particular variables.

The responses to the statements that men's participation would diminish the empowerment process for women and would question women's ability to have control over their own personal safety garnered the most disagreement. In this study, there were only two participants who stated that they did not and would not attend Take Back the Night events with a male. Of these two women, one agreed and one disagreed that men's participation would diminish the empowerment process for women. Of those who answered that they would attend with a male, three agreed and four were unsure whether men's participation would diminish the empowerment process for women. Similarly, regarding the statement concerning whether men's participation would question women's ability to have control over their own personal safety, three participants agreed and three were unsure. While most of the participants believe men play an important role in the movement to end sexual violence, there was some difference of opinion as to what effect their presence has on the Take Back the Night movement.

While most participants felt men should have some role in Take Back the Night and

Walk for Awareness events, the challenge for many was defining what that role should be and to what extent. A few felt it was a time for women only or that men's presence diminished women's empowerment process, but most believed that violence against women is not just a women's issue but it affects entire communities and our society as a whole, including men. Another common statement was that this particular form of violence, sexual assault, was perpetrated for the most part by men and since they are part of the problem, they should be a part of the solution. The common belief was that every human is responsible for fighting and preventing violence against women. By their participation, men can also provide support for women and play a role in the healing process. A strong majority of the research participants agreed that the participation of men is necessary for the prevention of violence against women, to educate other men about this issue, to help increase the awareness of violence against women within their communities, and to increase the awareness of men's own personal behaviors or beliefs towards sexual violence. Most believed that men's involvement did not diminish the empowerment process for women, or change the focus from women to men, and was not intended to question women's ability to have control over their own personal safety.

Rankings

In question 30, participants were asked to rank the following aspects of Take Back the Night in order of importance: education/awareness, coalition building, community action, healing, empowerment, providing a forum for survivors, and breaking down the stigma of being a survivor. When comparing survivor and other rankings, there were no significant differences between the two groups but there were rather large percentage differences between them for coalition building and community action. Fewer survivors (25%)

compared to other participants (47.8%) ranked coalition building as an important part of Take Back the Night, while more survivors (66.7%) compared to others (47.8%) felt that community action was an important element of Take Back the Night. Education, community action, and empowerment had the highest rankings by both survivors and other participants.

Overall Summary

This chapter examined the results of the interviews and questionnaires using qualitative analysis in the form of quotes and statements from the participants to support the quantitative findings. The interviews and open-ended questions on the questionnaire enabled the participants to provide personal accounts of and opinions about their own Take Back the Night and Walk for Awareness experience(s). This chapter explored in detail the participants' expectations of the event; whether their expectations were fulfilled; what, if any, benefits were gained from the event; any negative experiences; whether, from a survivor's perspective, it aided in their healing process; whether men participated in any of the activities; and, whether men should be allowed or encouraged to participate in such events, and why. While a small number of participants had negative experiences such as the lack of ethnic diversity, lack of men, and the presence of harassers or hecklers, it is apparent that the expectations and desired benefits for a majority of the participants surveyed were achieved. Empowerment, feeling a sense of community, and protesting violence against women were the most common expectations shared by the participants. For many, these same expectations were reported as benefits received from participating in Take Back the Night or Walk for Awareness events. The most common benefits reported were a sense of empowerment, a feeling of community, and protesting violence against women. Of the 12 participants who identified themselves as survivors of sexual violence, a majority felt that

their participation in these events was a healing or emotionally satisfying experience aiding in their healing process. Except for evaluation of community action, there seemed to be little significance and difference between survivors and other participants in the way they ranked the most important aspects of Take Back the Night. Healing, providing a forum for survivors, and breaking down the stigma of being a survivor were ranked low by both survivors and others. Education, community action, and empowerment had the highest rankings by both. While some negative experiences were reported, they were mostly related to the lack of representation by ethnic minorities and the presence of hecklers at their respective event.

Also explored was not only what kind of involvement men had in the respective events, but also what kind of effect their participation had. In a majority of participants' respective events, men were allowed to attend the rally and participate in the march. For many, the participation of men was and is perceived as necessary for the prevention of violence against women, to educate other men, to increase awareness within the community, and to increase awareness of men's own personal behaviors and beliefs. A majority of participants who would attend with a male agreed with the statements supporting the involvement of men. Only two participants felt that men should not participate in Take Back the Night events. At the same time, a few participants felt men's participation in the march diminishes the empowerment process for women, changes the focus from women to men, and questions women's ability to have control over their own personal safety. The data demonstrate that a few participants felt that the presence of men had a negative effect on their desired expectations and benefits. While most believed it was important for men to be a part of this movement, based on their responses to the open-ended questions, they were also

understanding and respectful of alternate viewpoints.

A majority of the participants felt more aware, informed and empowered about issues related to sexual violence after attending their first Take Back the Night event. It is also evident that most of the Take Back the Night participants in this study label themselves as feminists, activists, or both with a majority of them having attended three or more events. There is also a connection between being a survivor and the number of events attended. A majority of the self-identified survivors have also attended three or more events. Those who have not experienced sexual violence, and individuals who may not consider themselves as both feminists and activists, are less likely to attend multiple Take Back the Night events while those who identified as survivors, feminists, or both and who are also activists may be more committed to Take Back the Night. Because of the small sample size, it is difficult to reject the null hypothesis and conclude relationships or associations exist with certainty. The concluding chapter will utilize feminist literature to draw conclusions based on the interpretation of my research and what the results mean in broad terms for the Take Back the Night movement.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information and data collected and utilizing feminist scholarly theory, I will discuss some specific issues including the conflicts and criticisms of the Take Back the Night movement. This chapter will also offer some possibilities for future research on Take Back the Night. There has been little discourse about Take Back the Night itself, but there has been tremendous discourse about the issue of sexual assault. Feminists continue to debate the definition of sexual assault, who is responsible for sexual assault, the incidence of rape within our society, and whether feminists are themselves responsible for creating this rape "epidemic." Do events such as Take Back the Night, seen as a form of feminist social activism, truly raise awareness in our society or do they fuel the fires of this debate over the epidemic of violence? In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion about the anti-rape movement, but little discussion about the role of Take Back the Night rallies and marches in this movement. I will not address in great detail the debates over how to define sexual assault or the true accuracy of the variety of statistics utilized in the discourse surrounding sexual assault; these could be separate theses in and of themselves. Using my own research findings, I will address the small but controversial and contradictory discussion of Take Back the Night in reference to the anti-rape movement, including one critic (K. Roiphe, 1993) who discusses the Take Back the Night movement in some detail. I will also explore the role Take Back the Night has played not only in the healing process for survivors but also in the consciousness raising efforts of the anti-rape movement.

Conflicts and Criticisms of the Anti-Rape Movement

Much of the discussion surrounding the anti-rape movement stems from the various definitions of what constitutes sexual assault, which in turn affects the statistical data that are

compiled in sexual assault research. Some argue that broad definitions magnify the statistics for sexual assault, perhaps labeling a woman's experience as rape while she may define it otherwise. Others argue that narrow definitions of sexual assault may not truly reflect the scope and magnitude of the numbers of sexual assaults, perhaps taking away from or minimizing a woman's experience of rape. It should be noted that no one is denying that violence against women occurs. The proponents of the anti-rape movement cover a broad spectrum of beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. The continuum ranges from the rape crisis feminists, such as Dworkin, on one end, to the libertarian feminists, such as Paglia, on the other, and everything in between. The rape crisis feminists believe that all men are potential rapists and all women are potential victims living in a patriarchy of oppression; while the libertarian feminists believe women have significant personal responsibility in preventing sexual assault. Criticisms of the anti-rape movement come from scholars, mainstream feminists, and radical feminists, all of whom believe that each other's respective pedagogies create paranoia among women and cause harm to the anti-rape movement.

While Paglia (1992) believes that rape is an intolerable act, she states, "Feminism, which has waged a crusade for rape to be taken more seriously, has put young women in danger by hiding the truth about sex from them" (p. 67). Paglia believes that feminism has not only dramatized rape, but misled young women into believing that they are equal with the same freedoms allowed to men. She further believes that feminism's claim that rape is an act of violence, not sex, misleads women into believing that only strangers are likely to be rapists. She writes, "The only solution to date rape is female self-awareness and self-control. A woman's number one line of defense is herself" (Paglia, 1992, p. 70). While Paglia believes feminism has caused the rape epidemic, others believe it is our society's declining

moral standards that cause rape (Murphey, 1992) or men's hatred of women that causes rape (A. Roiphe, 1993).

Another issue argued by many is the incidence of rape in our society. How widespread is the problem of rape? Is rape a sex crime or an act of violence, power, and control? Several studies have determined that rape is a widespread problem on college campuses (Harvey & Koss, 1991; Schreiber, 1990), while another has said that rape is a disturbing fact of life (Shelton, 1991). Still others say that the incidence of rape is exaggerated (Gilbert, 1991; Rothbard 1991; Podhoretz, 1991; K. Roiphe, 1993), and that broad definitions of rape are harmful to women and men (Young, 1992). The understanding of the prevalence of rape is dependent on the definition of rape and the methods used by researchers to collect data. Some criticize rape-crisis feminists because they see rape as a means "by which *all men* keep *all women* in a state of fear" or as a means to define women as helpless creatures (Podhoretz, 1991, p. 249). Individual survivors of sexual assault also have specific opinions regarding the often interchangeable terms of rape, sexual assault, date rape, and acquaintance rape. Survivor Nancy Ziegenmeyer (1992) states, "I don't like the term *date rape*, because I think it takes something serious and makes it sound trivial" (p. 187). Others (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1997; Bohmer & Parrot, 1993) address the criticisms Gilbert, K. Roiphe, and others have made toward the rape crisis movement.

In this Take Back the Night study, the participants were not provided with definitions of feminism, feminist, sexual violence, or survivor, nor were they given any statistics regarding sexual violence against women; the subjects were encouraged to use their own definitions. I did this in recognition of the conflicts and lengthy discourse surrounding these issues. Also, I believe it is important for individuals, particularly survivors of sexual

violence, to be able to define their own experience, an important part of the empowerment and healing process, and also to be able to define their own concepts of feminism and what it means to them to be a feminist. One participant (#14) explained that the statistics provided during the event were important not only from an educational standpoint but they had “a lasting impact” on her as well. As is demonstrated by the different types of feminist scholarly discourse, there is no singular, unanimous, all-encompassing definition of feminism, just as there is no standard format or guidelines for the Take Back the Night movement.

Some also argue that broad definitions exaggerate the prevalence of sexual assault in our society and cause unnecessary fear among women. One female participant who expected she would feel safer after attending her first Take Back the Night event did come away from it with new concerns for her personal safety. She explained that she was more fearful after the event and “hyper-aware” of violence against women. While one of the goals of most Take Back the Night events is to raise awareness and to educate about the prevalence of violence against women, my work on Take Back the Night events suggests organizers do not want to scare women or make them paranoid about their own safety. On the other hand, women should be conscious of their surroundings and potential safety issues. Another participant said,

I think initially I remember after the first experience feeling sort of depressed. Well, no, I wouldn't say depressed, I would say maybe a little bit hopeless, a little bit cynical but then that quickly changed into more of an inspired kind of feeling having gotten more education and being around such a big crowd. I think probably the attitude shift was that change can be brought about through awareness and education. Women don't have to stand back and be victims and take a passive stance but that collectively, change can be brought about through awareness and through women's courage to share their stories and public awareness. (#14)

Paglia (1992) writes of the importance of “female self-awareness,” which is something Take Back the Night provides to its participants. If anything, I believe Take Back the Night encourages “female self-awareness” for those who may take their safety and security for granted due to the underreporting of the prevalence of sexual assault on many college campuses. As many of the participants indicated in their discussion of Take Back the Night, they became more aware of their personal safety and surroundings and went on to participate further in other forms of prevention and activism.

An important element of the anti-rape movement controversy that also needs to be addressed is how these criticisms affect the survivors of sexual violence. DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1997) feel that the arguments over the definitions and incidence of rape send mixed messages to society in general, but to survivors in particular. They critique the backlash theorists who “suggest that most acquaintance rape can be seen as something unpleasant, but generally not anything that would emotionally harm the victim” (p. 82). These arguments imply victim-blaming and a rape-supportive culture that places the responsibility for preventing sexual assault on women, rather than on society as a whole. DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1997) write,

What is clear is that rape survivors are hearing loud and clear the voice of a rape-supportive culture telling them that they are at fault for engaging in unwanted, nonconsensual sexual intercourse. Although most rape survivors have some difficulty in this society dealing with issues of self-blame, the problem of the hidden victim is particularly strong, in that she must first deal with the issue of whether she is in fact a victim at all. If women are told that they are to blame, then they will not report the crime to the police, and they will not seek help from the rape crisis center or various other support services for their emotional and psychological reactions to victimization. (pp. 91-92)

Take Back the Night not only provides a forum for survivors and others to speak out against these issues, but is also a means for campus and community to fight against the

stereotype of a victim-blaming, rape-supportive culture. Take Back the Night events force their respective campus and neighborhood communities to recognize, rather than deny, that sexual assault does happen. The recognition also forces the need for the implementation of university policies to address issues related to sexual assault. As this research has shown, the main reason both women and men participated in Take Back the Night was to come together as a community to publicly address and protest violence against women.

The critics of the rape-crisis feminists also condemn the stereotyping that goes on about both women and men. Many claim that the movement portrays all women as helpless, passive, innocent victims while all men are portrayed as independent, violent, aggressive perpetrators. The fundamental elements of most Take Back the Night events also address this issue. This study has shown that a majority of women participate in Take Back the Night to gain empowerment and to break down those stereotypes of the "helpless creature." The presence of men at Take Back the Night also addresses the "every man is a potential rapist" stereotype by showing that men can be and are interested in the prevention of violence against women. Most also agreed that the participation of men in this movement does not imply that women do not have the ability to control their own personal safety nor does it diminish the empowerment process for women. It is important to recognize that there were differences of opinions among the thirty-five participants of this study. As with any issue, consensus is not expected, nor should it be, but a respectful, open dialogue is key to the success of any movement. I do not believe that Take Back the Night further fuels the rape "epidemic," but that it provides one night a year for universities and communities, women and men, survivors and others to speak out against sexual violence.

In addition to these benefits, this study also determined that Take Back the Night

provides its participants with a greater sense of empowerment, more information about the issue of sexual assault, a greater perceived sense of safety, and assistance in the survivor's healing process. A majority of the research participants reported they felt more empowered regarding issues related to the prevention of sexual violence after attending a Take Back the Night event. By speaking out publicly, I believe Take Back the Night also portrays strength and courage rather than weakness or vulnerability. Wallace stated, "Empowerment to me means having some control over what happens to you and then also empowerment means that even when there are times you cannot stop something from happening you still feel that empowerment in recovering from it and surviving" (personal communication, August 12, 1998). Survivors are an important and powerful component of any rally because the messages they send have a far greater impact than any statistic could.

Specific Criticisms of Take Back the Night

For some, events such as Take Back the Night add fuel to the fire in this smoldering argument over the realities of rape. Paglia (1992) believes that "the date-rape debate is already smothering in propaganda churned out by the expensive Northeastern colleges and universities ... [who] love to turn the campus into hysterical psychodramas of sexual transgression" (p. 70). Do Take Back the Night rallies turn campuses into "hysterical psychodramas" or are they simply an event held one day a year to publicly address the issue of sexual assault in our neighborhoods, universities, and cities? K. Roiphe (1993) offers critical examination of the Take Back the Night rally held annually at her alma mater, Princeton, and of the event in general. Her criticisms of Take Back the Night include the march being seen "as therapy," the movement "offer[ing] a substitute for religion," and being a "spectacle of mass confession" (p. 37, 38, 43). She also criticizes the movement for adding

to the idea of female victimhood and vulnerability and, at the same time, for self-congratulation. She believes that the Take Back the Night movement is less about the issue of date-rape and more about a crisis in sexual identity which addresses society's and women's anxieties about sex in general. K. Roiphe (1993) writes,

The movement against date rape is a symptom of a more general anxiety about sex. ... Take Back the Night offers tangible targets, things to chant against and rally around in a sexually ambiguous time. Take Back the Night is a symptom of conservative attitudes about sex mingling with the remains of the sexual revolution. The crisis is not a rape crisis, but a crisis in sexual identity. (p. 26-27)

She feels that the movement serves a purpose and fulfills a need, but finds its perpetuation of the female victim and male perpetrator myths to be harmful. Shalit (2000) states,

Every year, there's a fresh debate over whether men should be allowed to march. ... There's no distinction between the sins of individual males and the male sex as a whole. Males are regularly denounced as the oppressor class, and rape is presented as white-male business-as-usual.

K. Roiphe (1993) criticizes the movement as a forum for proclaiming both victimhood and self-congratulation. She writes,

As the vocabulary shared across campuses reveals, there is an archetype, a model, for the victim's tale. As intimate details are squeezed into formulaic standards, they seem to be wrought with an emotion more generic than heartfelt. One theme that runs through all the speak-outs is self-congratulation – I have survived and now I am to be congratulated. ... In the context of Take Back the Night, it is entirely acceptable to praise yourself for bravery, to praise yourself for recovery, and to praise yourself for getting out of bed every morning and eating breakfast. Each story chronicles yet another ascent toward self-esteem, yet another 'revolution from within.' (p. 37)

While many of the participants in this study felt that their involvement in Take Back the Night provided them with a sense of empowerment, K. Roiphe (1993) believes that rather than empowering and celebrating women, "it seems instead to celebrate their vulnerability. ... The march seems to accept, even embrace, the mantle of victim status. ... The image they project is one of helplessness and passivity. The march elaborates on just how vulnerable

women are" (p. 44). As this research has shown, a majority of the participants joined the Take Back the Night movement as a form of feminist social activism with the goal of coming together as a community to address the issue of sexual violence. None of the participants felt that by participating they were perpetuating the myths of the helpless female victim. And for some survivors, it was a small but important part of their healing process, not a means to proclaim their vulnerability or passivity.

According to K. Roiphe (1993), by celebrating women's vulnerability, the movement works against its own principles of feminism and empowerment. K. Roiphe (1993) writes,

There is a power to be drawn from declaring one's victimhood and oppression. There is strength in numbers, and unfortunately right now there is strength in being the most oppressed. Students scramble for that microphone, for a chance for a moment of authority. ... Proclaiming victimhood doesn't help project strength. (p. 44)

She also believes it is inappropriate to compare the concept of being a survivor of a sexual assault to being a survivor of a plane crash or the Holocaust and that doing so erroneously equates rape to death (p. 73). According to K. Roiphe, the rape-crisis movement is "a movement that deals in retrospective trauma" (1993, p. 80). She also finds the concept of a public speak-out as problematic and impersonal. K. Roiphe (1993) feels the mass participation is a spectacle that is "strange and unconvincing" as though the participants are there more out of curiosity rather than support (p. 43).

Craft has also criticized the purpose and direction of Take Back the Night. Her concerns are aimed at the damage being done by women to the Take Back the Night movement and to feminism. She has become frustrated over the lack of creativity by the event organizers who are also willing to relinquish control over their own events in order to maintain the status quo (N. Craft, personal communication, May 20, 1999). Craft believes

women need to be more vocal, angry, courageous, and creative in actively addressing and protesting violence against women. She writes,

The marches can be very inspiring, especially for women who haven't been to many demonstrations. But it's been too many candle vigils and boring variations without the courage and/or creative thinking by women to examination how to take the yearly marches a step further. Too many women are using the Take Back the Night marches (and other feminist marches as well) as a method for socializing, thinking that passes for political organizing and work all year round. (N. Craft, personal communication, May 27, 2000)

For some of the participants in this study, that sense of connection and networking with other women and other feminists was an important part of their experience. One participant wrote, "I love marching and communing with others and feeling the power flowing from woman to woman" (#16). Another addressed the importance of networking by saying, "I got to meet lots of other feminists" (#28). In my experience with Take Back the Night, there are individuals who continue to actively focus their energy on the prevention of sexual violence. Of the participants in this study, 94.3% said they go on to participate further in other forms of prevention or activism, but it is difficult to determine at what frequency and to what extent.

Much of K. Roiphe's examination of and attitudes towards the event is supported by a highly publicized situation in which a Princeton student admitted to fabricating her experience of sexual assault. She writes, "To be a part of this blanket warmth, this woman-centered nonhierarchical empowered notion, students are willing to lie" (p. 39). A student who had spoken at the Princeton Take Back the Night rally from 1988-1991 admitted that her story was a lie. At the end of her senior year, the student retracted her story and told the truth, saying she made her statements "in order to raise awareness for the plight of the campus rape victims" (p. 40). K. Roiphe responded by writing, "these were fictions in the service of political truth" continuing "if [her] political zeal and emotional intensity blurred

the truth of her story, one wonders how many other survivors experience a similar blurring” (pp. 40-41). K. Roiphe wonders what kind of effect these “isolated incidents” have on people’s attitudes towards Take Back the Night. Should people be “willing to sacrifice individual certainty to politicize group psychology” (p. 41)?

Others have addressed the question whether false accusations of rape can serve a useful purpose for the anti-rape movement. In her essay, Gibbs (1991) critiques the view that rape has become politicized and is symbolic of a patriarchal society. Gibbs (1991) disagrees that “rape is a subjective term, one that women must use to draw attention to other, nonviolent, even nonsexual forms of oppression” (p. 211). She also examines the argument that these false accusations can benefit men by forcing them to be more aware of their own personal behaviors and beliefs. Gibbs (1991) writes,

Rape is an abuse of power. But so are false accusations of rape, and to suggest that men whose reputations are destroyed might benefit because it will make them more sensitive is an attitude that is sure to backfire on women who are seeking justice for all victims. (p. 211)

The term rape should not be used loosely nor is the accusation of rape something to be taken lightly.

There is no way to determine whether an incident similar to this has taken place at any of the Take Back the Night events in this study, but I think most participants would agree that fabricated stories not only tarnish the image and diminish the effectiveness of the movement, but also trivialize the experiences of others. The U.S. Department of Justice (1997) estimates that accusations of forcible rape are “unfounded” or false about 8% of the time. False accusations can be damaging not only to the movement but to survivors as well because it reinforces the victims’ fears that they will not be believed, which is a major

concern for the survivors I work with.

While K. Roiphe (1993) has had some harsh criticisms for Take Back the Night, she also concedes that Take Back the Night is filling a need for a variety of students on college campuses. She writes,

The marches are not the production of one vocal clique. The students involved represent a cross section of the college community. ... An issue that unites such disparate elements, that compels so many students to act, demands scrutiny. ... Take Back the Night is becoming one of our society's coming-of-age rituals. (pp. 48-49)

The fact that Ames, Boone, and many other campuses and communities have been holding events for well over a decade supports this. They continue to be rites of passage on many college campuses.

The disparate views of the Take Back the Night and anti-rape movement include a simple definition of what constitutes sexual assault to the powerful experiences gained from the movement to disagreements of what has led to its endurance. I believe the continued existence of sexual assault in our society and the needs it fulfills for survivors of sexual assault are two of the main reasons for the endurance of Take Back the Night. I also believe further examination is required to better address the critiques from those in the anti-rape crisis backlash who find these movements to be dramatic, misleading, and self-congratulatory. This study has shown that while the participants share some common beliefs and attitudes, each person brings into the event her or his own experiences and expectations. I believe that Take Back the Night is a positive custom that not only bonds the individual participants together within an event, but also brings universities and communities together on a common ground and with a common purpose.

Consciousness-Raising

There has been some discussion among feminists and scholars about the importance of sexual assault prevention activities and educational campaigns, particularly those that occur on college campuses. As has been demonstrated, Take Back the Night is a well-known component of educational campaigns on many campuses and in many communities around the country. These forms of educational and prevention activities can also be categorized as a way to facilitate social change or as consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising can be defined as a process of sharing individual experiences and perspectives, analyzing the knowledge and information obtained, and then acting to facilitate social and personal change (Ward, 1995). Consciousness-raising includes techniques such as speak-outs, feminist campaigns, public forums, and educational activities (Ward, 1995). Many feminist scholars have discussed the importance of education in effecting social change. "In the area of sexual violence, feminists have recommended consciousness-raising as a means of eliminating rape myths and improving attitudes toward victims of sexual assault. Consciousness-raising may be implemented directly or indirectly and may occur on a general or specific level" (Ward, 1995, p. 47). While some (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1997; Reinharz, 1992) believe these are important elements of addressing sexual assault on campus, others (K. Roiphe, 1993; Paglia, 1992) criticize them for transforming the issue into a magnified and exaggerated feminist-made epidemic. For Gilbert (1991), consciousness-raising is seen as a negative thing. He considers consciousness-raising as a manipulative means by which feminist researchers calculate sexual assault statistics that are exaggerated and distorted and believes that this "bit of definitional stretching may be [a way] to bring the problem into public view" (p. 241). On the other hand, DeKeseredy and Schwartz offer educational campaigns and consciousness-

raising as important means to address both the anti-feminist backlash and the prevalence of sexual assault.

Much of DeKeseredy and Schwartz's discussion is aimed at the importance of education in changing attitudes and behaviors and addressing and preventing sexual assault, especially on college campuses.

Many people who work in this field argue that the most critical time to do this is in pre-college orientation, if there is one, or in the very first few days on campus. ... In the first few days of college, before these lessons are learned, a great deal of sexual assault takes place on many college campuses. (p. 150)

In my experience as a sexual assault advocate, this is a very realistic and accurate statement. Many of the survivors I have worked with were freshman women adjusting to their first semester at ISU when they were assaulted. This is also one of the main reasons that the Walk for Awareness at Appalachian State University in Boone is held in the beginning of September and targeted towards in-coming freshmen. "The most widely supported intervention in the case of campus sexual assaults is some form of educational campaign" (p. 143). On many college campuses, including Appalachian State and Iowa State, Take Back the Night plays a significant role in the educational campaigns and prevention activities that address sexual violence.

DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1991) include the following as important goals for an educational campaign: (a) to raise awareness of the issue of sexual assault, (b) to discuss the role alcohol and drugs play in sexual assaults, (c) to inform students of the importance of communication, and (d) to provide information regarding services available for sexual assault victims. These recommended goals are similar to those of the Take Back the Night movement. Take Back the Night encompasses these consciousness-raising goals and

techniques. As a public forum and a feminist campaign, Take Back the Night also provides the means for individuals to speak out and to educate others about the issue of sexual assault.

Consciousness-raising is a way to effect empowerment, attitude change, and social change on both individual and societal levels. Consciousness-raising also includes publicity campaigns and media exposure. Take Back the Night strives to reach not only the individual participants of these activities, but also the broader community as well through the marches, publicity, and media coverage. On many college campuses, Take Back the Night is the feature event in a series of events and is supplemented by other programs and activities aimed at the prevention of sexual assault. "We owe it to ourselves and our sons and daughters to make our communities safer for every citizen, regardless of gender. A 'Take Back the Night' march can be a good way to get the attention" (Ziegenmeyer, 1992, p. 178). Ledray (1994) also mentions neighborhood activism, such as Take Back the Night, as a way in which communities can bring recognition to the issue. "Rape is a crime against the community, not just the individual. The community has both an opportunity and a responsibility to play an active role in effecting change" (Ledray, 1994, p. 253). Other research has shown that "more dynamic, interactive program formats [can] enhance the desired effects of consciousness-raising [and] attitude change" (Lonsway, 1996, p. 247). Take Back the Night has the ability to affect an individuals' empowerment level by instilling in them the ability to have some control over their own personal safety, the strength to confront issues surrounding violence against women, the power to prevent further violence through education, and the feeling of affirmation in respect to their own personal experiences.

Role of Men in Consciousness-Raising

An important element for discussion regarding consciousness-raising is the role of men in such activities. Kaufman and Zepatos (1995) write, "Women are, and have been throughout history, the heart, soul, power, and fuel behind countless fights for change" (p. 20). They also believe that campus activism is alive and well and that "young women and men activists are as committed and as productive as ever" (p. 99). According to Shalit (2000), on the other hand, "[Take Back the Night] has been hijacked by a group of activist feminists whose goals are radical and millennial. Under their leadership, the march has promoted acrimony between men and women on campus." I believe that my research has proven the exact opposite. It is a diverse group of individuals, both women and men, who have joined the Take Back the Night movement with the common goal of preventing sexual violence.

Regardless of the criticisms, it seems clear that both female and male students are joining in progressive activist efforts, such as Take Back the Night, to try to end violence against women. As has been reflected in the various Take Back the Night events in this study, both women and men are playing active roles in the Take Back the Night movement. DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1997) write, "Campus anti-rape groups nationally are often split on whether to accept the help of college men ... yet, there are reasons for women and men to work together on this problem" (p. 165). Ledray (1994) writes,

Each of us must be a party to the resolution of this problem. ... In the process of bringing about this change, we must not establish a new adversarial system pitting women against men. Both men and women must work together to stop rape. (p. 257-258)

Consciousness-raising activists should not only include women and men in their efforts, but

should also be aimed at both of them as well.

In a majority of these public forums and speak-outs, more and more men are playing important roles. Because sexual assault will not end until men stop sexually assaulting women, "all men should struggle to reduce female victimization in public and private contexts" (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1997, p. 165). bell hooks (1995) writes, "We live in a culture that condones and celebrates rape. ... Our movement to transform rape culture can only progress as men come to feminist thinking and actively challenge sexism and male violence against women" (p. 231). Just recently, men were allowed to join the Take Back the Night march for the first time at Columbia University "in an attempt to unify the community and as a powerful symbol of how [we] should be addressing the issues of sexual violence" (Barnard Bulletin, 1998). DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1997) believe the involvement of men in these consciousness-raising activities will also prevent K. Roiphe and others from being "successful in convincing people that claims of sexual assault on campus are some sort of feminist plot to reinterpret traditional male-female relations to give women the permanent upper-hand" (p. 171).

Survivors

In September of 1999, Leigh Cooper Wallace spoke at her tenth and last Walk for Awareness at Appalachian State University. Her participation during the past decade "has helped her cope with tragedy. But now it's time to move on" (Hodges, 1999, p.1A). Wallace states,

This event has helped. You just feel like you have so much support from people you don't even know. ... I would like to think I've given hope. I think this tenth anniversary is finally a chance for me to close this chapter in my life. (Hodges, 1999, p. 1A)

For Wallace, the Walk for Awareness has meant a lot for her own recovery and healing process, but also much more. Walk for Awareness is not just for survivors, but an opportunity to educate, to empower, and to help others. She states,

I feel like the emphasis here is resources for women, stories of women, and the message is what can you do to make this community safer. This year [1998] the theme is the power of one. What one person can do, what you can do to help stop violence. So each person, I hope, will walk away thinking what can I do. Is it I need to change my behaviors or the behaviors of my friends and then what can I do to help people recovering from this make it. It's geared towards women but the message is always a message of what can you do to change this. What can we do, men *and* women. (L. Wallace, personal communication, August 12, 1998)

For other survivors who have participated in these events, Take Back the Night holds positive, powerful meaning in their healing process as well. Survivor Nancy Ziegenmeyer (1992) describes her first Take Back the Night as "an amazing thing to be in the middle of" (p. 177). She writes,

I was nervous at first ... but it didn't take long before I got caught up in the meaning of the march, and the sheer joy of it. To walk through the streets at night, singing and laughing and chanting, and not be afraid was something I had never experienced even before [my] rape, let alone after. (Ziegenmeyer, 1992, p. 177)

For many, an important part of the healing process is sharing. Because rape can be a frightening and overwhelming experience, it is important to "share in ways that will be beneficial to [a survivor]" (Maltz, 1991, p. 56). According to Maltz (1991) in The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse, only each individual can know when it is the right time for them to share their experience(s) with others, and an important component of this sharing is to "share in safety and in steps." Survivors often "plan their disclosure thoughtfully and carefully ... considering who will be receptive, supportive, and caring about [their] needs" (p. 56). Part of the essence of Take Back the Night is providing a safe time, place, and audience who are willing to listen, be supportive, and be respectful of

individual's personal experiences. Although K. Roiphe (1993) criticizes "voicelessness" and "being silenced" (p. 34) as a common theme addressed in Take Back the Night, many have not lost their voice but instead found Take Back the Night as a welcoming, safe, and valued place to be vocal. For Ziegenmeyer (1992), "One of the most important things I've learned is that I found my sanity when I found my voice. I've learned that to *witness* is to speak out, to name the unnameable, to turn and face it down" (p. 218).

An element of Take Back the Night that was researched in this study was whether participating in a Take Back the Night event(s) was a healing or emotionally satisfying experience for survivors of sexual violence. Of the self-identified survivors of sexual violence in this study, a majority felt their participation was a healing or emotionally satisfying experience. Chapter 4 provided anecdotal information and stories from survivors about how participation in Take Back the Night events affected their own healing process. For many of the survivors who participated in this research, the sense of community, support, and affirmation was an important element of their healing journey.

Possibilities for Future Research

As discussed throughout this thesis, the sample for this study was small but informative. To get a better and more accurate understanding of Take Back the Night and the opinions and attitudes of those who participate in such events, a much larger study could further explore its enduring existence on so many college campuses and further examine the criticisms of the anti-rape movement. Why do the marches continue to be a rite of passage on so many college campuses? Based on the results of this research, a larger study should include not only a bigger sample size, but a larger cross-section of colleges, universities, organizations, and communities that hold Take Back the Night rallies, including those who

do not allow men to participate in the rally, the march, or both. While a majority of this sample believed men played an important role in the Take Back the Night movement, is this the norm or a deviation? What kinds of activities are provided for the men during women-only marches?

Through research on the internet, it is possible to obtain a list of hundreds of colleges and communities that hold annual Take Back the Night activities. On-line message boards and e-mails to event organizers are a relatively fast and inexpensive way to obtain information from around and even outside the country. Utilizing these resources can provide access to individuals who may be willing to participate in the study. Most websites with Take Back the Night information indicate the time of year and the guidelines for the event. A larger sample may also be obtained by attending various events to identify individuals willing to participate in the study and a means by which to contact them. I would recommend follow-up contact shortly after the event while the experience, emotions, thoughts, etc. are still fresh in the participants' minds. It is also important to identify individuals willing to participate in follow-up questions, particularly those that require clarification or further explanation.

A large portion of this research focused almost entirely on the issue of gender and Take Back the Night. Briefly mentioned in this thesis are other issues surrounding Take Back the Night such as race, class, and sexual orientation exclusions that should be explored in greater depth. A common criticism of Take Back the Night determined by this study was the lack of ethnic diversity among the participants. Take Back the Night is not only often seen as a movement by and for women, but by and for white, middle to upper class, heterosexual women. Do women, and men for that matter, who do not fit into this narrow

focus feel welcomed and included in such events? Do Take Back the Night events occurring around the country address issues of sexual violence and women of color, working class women, or lesbians? Are their issues and concerns being adequately addressed? Sexual violence in our society comes in all shapes and forms, with no one particular gender, race, class, or sexual orientation immune. While Take Back the Night addresses the issue of sexual violence in our society, is it inclusive and understanding of the different dynamics in our society? These are questions to be addressed in further research and studies.

In this study, the participants were asked to identify themselves through a variety of questions, such as gender, age, sexual orientation, feminist, activist, and ethnicity. Special attention should be given to the choices provided to avoid excluding anyone, and open-ended questions should be used in order to allow for a variety of responses. Like the questions addressed specifically to women and to survivors, a larger study should include special questions aimed at specific target audiences such as women of color, lesbians, men, older women, or individuals who do not consider themselves feminists or activists. Based on the criticisms of the feminist movement in general, it is important to explore participants' attitudes about and opinions towards Take Back the Night. Are their needs being met, do they feel the event is inclusive or divisive, do their opinions differ not only from others in their same ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, or age group, but also from those outside their group? Do universities with more diverse student bodies hold Take Back the Night events? A larger study should also target colleges with students of color as the majority of the student population. If Take Back the Night is truly meant to provide empowerment, healing, a sense of community, and the means for a public protest of violence against all women, it must be determined whether the Take Back the Night movement is an inclusive

and welcoming event for all. A majority of the participants surveyed felt their events were inclusive in that anyone was welcome to attend, but a majority of the participants in the study were young, white, heterosexual women. Further research needs to determine whether the examples used in this study are reflective of the Take Back the Night movement as a whole.

Summary

In conclusion, the research participants provided personal accounts of and opinions about their own experience(s) in the Take Back the Night movement. Overall, for a majority of these participants, Take Back the Night was a positive event and a means by which individuals could take action and address the issue of sexual violence in our society. While a small number of participants had negative experiences, it is apparent that the expectations and desired benefits for a majority of the participants surveyed were achieved. A sense of empowerment, a feeling of community, and an opportunity for protesting violence against women were the most common benefits shared by these participants. A majority of the participants felt more informed and empowered about issues related to sexual violence after attending their first Take Back the Night event. Of the twelve participants who identified themselves as survivors of sexual violence, a majority felt that their participation in these events was healing or an emotionally satisfying experience aiding in their healing process. Education, community action, and empowerment had the highest rankings of importance by both survivors and others.

It is also apparent that for a majority of the participants, the active involvement of men was and is considered necessary for the prevention of violence against women, to educate other men, to increase awareness within the community, and to increase awareness of men's own personal behaviors and/or beliefs. The data demonstrate that only a few

participants felt that the presence of men had a negative effect on their desired expectations or fulfilled benefits. This counteracts the claims that the Take Back the Night movement categorizes all men as potential perpetrators of sexual violence. Both women and men believe they have the opportunity and the responsibility to effect social change. While Take Back the Night events may be held only once a year in individual communities, the thousands of events occurring on campuses and in communities across the country and around the world continue to make sexual violence a public issue as well as an individual crisis.

APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

Julie Wooden
jwooden@iastate.edu

I am conducting research for my master's thesis and would like your help. My name is Julie Wooden and I am a graduate student at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. I am investigating the proposed benefits of Rallies and Marches, such as Take Back the Night, Walk for Awareness, etc., and whether the inclusion of men helps or hinders these benefits. Research will be conducted through the use of personal interviews and written questionnaires. By filling out this questionnaire, you are giving your permission for me to use your information in my thesis.

Subjects who have been a victim of sexual assault will be asked to recall their own personal experiences and may incur psychological or emotional risks. Respondents have the option not to answer any question that makes them uncomfortable. Every participant is free to withdraw his/her consent and to discontinue participation in the research project at any time without prejudice to the participant.

Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of the data that is provided through the use of pseudonyms and assigned research numbers. No real names will be used in the written material unless deemed to be an integral part of the thesis and permission granted by the subject. I am willing to answer any questions or concerns that you may have concerning the information collected or the procedures through which the data is acquired.

Thesis research should be completed by May 1999. If necessary, participants will be contacted later, either through e-mail or written materials, for the purpose of information clarification or for follow-up questions. If you are willing to provide your name, e-mail address, and/or phone number for follow-up questions or would like to receive a copy of the statistical results of the survey, please provide the following information:

Name:

Mailing address:

E-mail address:

Phone number:

APPENDIX B – QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How do you define yourself? Check all that apply.

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgender
☐ 20 years old or younger ☐ 21-30 years old ☐ 31-40 years old
☐ 41 years old or older
☐ Straight ☐ Gay ☐ Lesbian ☐ Bi-sexual
☐ Feminist ☐ Activist
 Ethnicity _____

2. When and where did you attend a Take Back the Night Rally (or similar format)?

3. How many Take Back the Night Rallies/Marches have you attended?

☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three - Five ☐ More than five

4. How did you find out about it? Check all that apply.

☐ Word of mouth ☐ Publicity
☐ Coalition ☐ Member of planning committee
☐ Friend ☐ Other (please explain)

5. Was attendance of this event required by a campus organization, affiliation, course requirement, etc.? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what? _____

6. Did you attend the event with anyone? If so, whom? Check all that apply.

☐ Spouse ☐ Partner ☐ Boyfriend/Girlfriend ☐ Friend
☐ Relative (Be specific _____)
☐ Other (please explain)

7. (For women) Did you attend this event with a male? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how would you define your relationship with that person?

(Be specific) _____

If not, would you attend this event with a male? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Did you have certain expectations about attending your **first** rally/march?
 ____ Yes ____ No

9. If so, what were your expectations for the event? Check all that apply.

____ Empowerment*	____ Gain knowledge/information
____ Become more involved	____ Feel safer
____ Feel a sense of community	____ Protest violence against women
____ Protest pornography	____ Other (please explain)

*Empowerment can be defined as having a feeling/sense of ability to have some control over your own personal safety, having the strength to confront issues surrounding violence against women, having the power to prevent/stop further violence, or feeling believed/affirmed.

10. Were your expectations fulfilled? ____ Yes ____ No

11. Did you feel you benefited from the event? ____ Yes ____ No

If so, what did you especially feel was beneficial? Check all that apply.

____ Sense of empowerment	____ Gained knowledge/information
____ Aided healing process	____ Felt safer
____ Felt a sense of community	____ Protested violence against women
____ Protested pornography	____ Other (please explain)

12. Was there anything that really disturbed or bothered you about the event? If so, what? Check all that apply.

____ lack of ethnic diversity	____ lack of participation
____ lack of forum for survivors	____ lack of men
____ inclusion of men	____ exclusion of men
____ presence of harassers/hecklers	____ too heterosexist
____ other (please explain)	____ overall message (please explain)

13. What did you think about the event? Check all that apply. Was it...

____ informative	____ inclusive (did you feel a sense of community inclusion)
____ effective/met expectations	____ thought-provoking
____ emotionally upsetting	____ frightening
____ emotionally satisfying	____ safe space (did you feel a sense of comfort and safety while participating)
____ other (please explain)	

14. Did you become more knowledgeable about issues surrounding violence against women such as statistics, facts/myths, preventive measures, resources, etc.? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(Please explain)

15. *Before* you attended the (first) event, how aware or well informed did you feel about issues related to sexual violence?

☐ Very well informed ☐ Somewhat informed ☐ Not very informed

16. *After* you attended the (first) event, how aware or well informed did you feel about issues related to sexual violence?

☐ More informed than previously ☐ About the same level of information
☐ Less informed than previously

17. Empowerment can be defined in many ways, check all that apply to you after participating in this event.

☐ a feeling/sense of ability to have some control over your own personal safety
☐ strength to confront issues surrounding violence against women
☐ power to prevent/stop further violence
☐ feeling believed/affirmed
☐ other: _____

18. *Before* you attended the (first) event, how empowered did you feel about issues related to the prevention of sexual violence?

☐ Very empowered ☐ Somewhat empowered ☐ Not very empowered

19. *After* you attended the (first) event, how empowered did you feel about issues related to the prevention of sexual violence?

☐ More empowered than previously ☐ About the same level of empowerment
☐ Less empowered than previously

20. (For survivors of sexual violence) Was this a healing or emotionally satisfying experience?

If so, how?

If not, why not?

21. As a survivor of sexual violence, do you feel adequate information on other resources, support groups, counseling services, etc. was provided? ____ Yes ____ No
Please explain.

22. After attending (your first) TBTN, did you go on to further participate in other forms of prevention or activism related to issues of violence? If so, what? Check all that apply.

- ____ More aware of personal safety ____ More aware of your surroundings
 ____ Trust your own instincts more ____ Speak up against inappropriate jokes/remarks
 ____ Help plan other community events ____ Volunteer for women's organization/shelter
 ____ Take classes (women's studies, self-defense, etc)
 Other _____

23. Did your attitude towards violence against women change after attending the rally/march? If so, how?

24. To your knowledge, did men...

- | | Yes | No | Don't know |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|------------|
| a. help plan the rally/march | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| b. attend the rally | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| c. speak at the rally | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| d. participate in the march | _____ | _____ | _____ |

25. For the following reasons some believe that men **should** participate in Take Back the Night. Please check if you agree or disagree that the participation of men is necessary...

- | | Agree | Disagree | Not sure |
|---|-------|----------|----------|
| a. for the prevention of violence | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| b. to educate other men | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| c. to increase awareness within the community | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| d. to increase awareness of their own personal behaviors and/or beliefs | _____ | _____ | _____ |

26. For the following reasons some believe that men **should not** participate in Take Back the Night. Please check if you agree or disagree that the participation of men...

- | | Agree | Disagree | Not sure |
|---|-------|----------|----------|
| a. diminishes the empowerment process for women | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| b. changes the focus from women to men | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| c. questions women's ability to have control over their own personal safety | _____ | _____ | _____ |

27. Please further explain your personal beliefs about whether men should or should not participate in Take Back the Night or other similar events.

28. Please list other activities related to anti-violence work for women you are involved in. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Volunteer work (i.e. - for a shelter, crisis line, Boys and Girls Club, etc.)
☐ Committee work (i.e. - plan further activities to prevent violence against women)
☐ Advocacy (i.e. - speak out against violence against women)
 Other _____

29. Are any of the activities you're involved in now a result of attending Take Back the Night/ Walk for Awareness? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Please explain _____

30. Please rank in order of importance. What do you feel is the most important aspect of Take Back the Night? (1 = most important)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education/awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Empowerment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coalition building | <input type="checkbox"/> Forum for survivors/honoring survivors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community action | <input type="checkbox"/> Breaks down the stigma of being a survivor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Explain) |

31. Do you have any additional thoughts/comments concerning your personal experience(s) participating in this type of rally/march? _____

Please feel free to provide additional comments for any of the above questions. Add extra space if necessary.

If you wish to receive copy of the statistical results of the survey, please check the line below and fill out the information at the beginning of the survey.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the survey results.

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